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A

HISTORY

OF THE

CHURCH IN BRATTLE STREET, BOSTON.

BY ITS PASTOR,

SAMUEL KIRKLAND LOTHROP.

BOSTON:
WM. CROSBY AND H. P. NICHOLS,
111 WASHINGTON STREET.
1851.

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TO

THE MEMBERS

OF THE

CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN BRATTLE SQUARE,

THIS HISTORY

IS GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR,

S. K. LOTHROP.

PREFACE.

Some alterations and considerable additions have been made to the following discourses since the substance of them was preached in Brattle Street Church, in the course of the year 1850. Notwithstanding the introduction of some new matter, I have retained, in publishing them, the name and style and direct address of sermons, because this was more convenient than to alter the whole structure of the manuscripts. This is my apology, or explanation, for whatever may be thought inappropriate, or in violation of good taste, in a sermon, or a volume of sermons. I have preferred to subject myself to this charge rather than omit from the text or the notes any thing, whether a dull detail or an amusing anecdote,

which would help to illustrate the events or the characters of which I was writing.

I have ventured to publish the following pages because, invited to do so by the Standing Committee, I felt some assurance that the members of the Society worshipping in Brattle Square would be interested in them, and because I hoped that they might prove some contribution, however small, toward that which is so much needed, an ecclesiastical history of New England.

The researches of my predecessor had made much of the work of investigation easy to my hands, and while I have in every case consulted for myself original documents and records, I desire to make this general acknowledgment of the use I have made of the very full and valuable notes appended to his historical sermon.

S. K. L.

Boston, June 2d, 1851.

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SERMON I.

WE HAVE HEARD WITH OUR EARS, O GOD, OUR FATHERS HAVE TOLD US, WHAT WORK THOU DIDST IN THEIR DAYS, IN THE TIMES OF OLD. — Psalm xliv. 1.

RETURN, WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD OF HOSTS! LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND BEHOLD, AND VISIT THIS VINE, AND THE VINEYARD WHICH THY RIGHT HAND HATH PLANTED. — Psalm lxxx. 14, 15.

THESE passages of Scripture direct our thoughts to the past, the present, and the future. They remind us of the goodness of God, displayed in guidance and blessing to our fathers. They enforce attention to our own condition, duties, and obligations as a Christian church, and to our need of Divine help, of the quickening influences of God's holy spirit, that we may be made strong for the work of the future. They have been suggested to me by investigations which, for some weeks past, have occupied a large share of my time, and their appropriateness as a Scriptural introduction to what I have now to offer will appear as I proceed.

The passing season completes the third half-century of the existence of the church and society in Brattle Square. The first date in our church records is "December 12th, 1699"; the third date is "Lord's day, Dec. 24th," of the same year. Under this latter date, we are informed that on that day the society, for the first time, "met for public worship in their pleasant new-built house"; and that Dr. Colman, its first minister, "preached from 2 Chronicles vi. chap. 18 verse: But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built."

Making due allowance for the change of style, the present Sunday is the nearest Lord's day we can get to the anniversary of December 24th, 1699. For one hundred and fifty years, therefore, the spot on which we are assembled has been consecrated to the worship of Almighty God, — a period longer by several years than any other spot in the city has ever been held to the same sacred uses, with the exception of those on which the "Old South Church" and the King's Chapel now stand. For a century and a half, the Christian church and society whose foundations were here laid by sober, thoughtful, godly men, in the purpose of an earnest piety and an enlarged, catholic spirit, have continued to flourish,

— a fountain whose living waters have done something in every generation, we trust, to make glad this city of our God. It is not meet that the occasion should pass without some notice. I propose to make use of it by briefly reviewing some of the more prominent points in our history, and by the presentation of such thoughts on ecclesiastical changes, the progress of religious opinion, and the present condition and aspect of our religious affairs, as this review may suggest.

I am well aware, as are many who hear me, that in 1824, when the congregation, after an absence of some months, occasioned by an extensive and thorough repair of the house, reassembled here for public worship, Dr. Palfrey, then minister of the society, presented, in two sermons which were subsequently published, a history of this church, marked by that thorough and patient research, that accurate statement and nice discrimination, for which he is distinguished. I know that a work of this kind which he has once done well needs not to be done again. The hope of doing it better would be vain. But to most of those who hear me those sermons are not probably familiar, even if they are known. A quarter of a century, also, embracing a period of our history not altogether devoid of interest, has elapsed since they were written ; and although I may not hope to glean any new or important facts

in a field so thoroughly explored by my predecessor, yet, as our stand-points are twenty-five years apart, old facts may present themselves under such different aspects as to make the review of them now and by us not uninteresting and uninstructive. I invite your attention, therefore, to a subject to which we cannot be wholly indifferent, and of which we ought not to be entirely ignorant, — the history of this church, the principles embodied and the ends aimed at in its organization.

The first movements towards the formation of this society seem to have been made as early as 1697. The deed by which Thomas Brattle conveyed to Thomas Clarke and his associates a piece of land called *Brattle Close*, for the erection of a house of worship, bears date January 10, 1698, which clearly indicates that some preliminary steps had been taken in the matter. At this period, there were three other Congregational churches in the town; viz. the First Church, which then worshipped on the spot now occupied by Joy's Building, and was under the pastoral care of Messrs. Allen and Wadsworth; the Second Church, whose place of worship was at the head of North Square, where officiated those men so celebrated in the annals of the New England churches, Drs. Increase and Cotton Mather; and the Old South Church, which,

amid some difficulties and against public proclamation on the part of the civil authorities, had been founded about thirty years previous, and had erected a house of worship on the spot where the present Old South stands, and where preached at this period the Rev. Samuel Willard.

In addition to these three Congregational churches, there were three other religious societies in the town; viz. the First Baptist Church, which, after various fortunes and severe persecutions, had at length succeeded, in 1679, ten years after its organization, in building a church, situated by the side of the old Mill Pond, near what is now called Stillman Street, and whose minister was at this period the Rev. John Emblen; the King's Chapel Church, whose early history is deeply interesting, as that of the first successful attempt, marked by some things not very creditable to either party, to introduce the Episcopacy of Old England among the Congregationalists of New England, who disliked it, and had fled from it. This church was organized in 1686, had erected a wooden building on the site of the present Stone Chapel, and enjoyed at this period the services of the Rev. Samuel Myles and the Rev. Christopher Bridge.

After 1680, the persecution of the Quakers, or Friends, in a great measure ceased, and from that time to 1808 they had regular meetings in

Boston. At the period to which we are directing our attention, 1699, they had a flourishing society, had built the first brick meeting-house in the town, which was situated somewhere in the neighborhood of this spot, from which the society shortly after, in 1708, removed to Congress Street.

These six churches were, at this period, in a prosperous and peaceful condition; at least, it does not appear that there were any violent contentions among them, or that our church originated in any particular dissension or stormy secession from any one of them. The causes which led to the formation of this society were of a more honorable character. To understand them, it is necessary to give a brief glance back from 1699, at some of the ecclesiastical questions that had arisen in the New England churches during the seventy years in which they had now been gathering and growing on this free American soil. Most of these questions related to church order and discipline, and were only indirectly connected with theological doctrine. The first of them which it is important for us to notice is that in regard to the proper subjects of baptism. Originally the administration of this rite was restricted to the children of those who were members of churches in full communion. How early a more liberal opinion was expressed, and a more liberal

practice aimed at or attempted, on the part of any of the fathers of New England, it is difficult precisely to determine. Probably, however, this occurred at a very early period; for we know that the New England emigrants, in the exercise of the large liberty and independence which they had here secured, gave free scope to thought and inquiry, and soon began to lose a little of their reverence for some things which were important only because they had been made matters of controversy, or were incidentally connected with great principles in whose defence they had endured persecution and exile.

To such an extent, indeed, had this freedom been exercised, that, in less than twenty years after the settlement of Plymouth, great anxiety was awakened among the Non-conformists in England at the reports which reached that country of the departure of the American churches from some of the customs, opinions, and practices which they had carried with them from the father-land. Letters of inquiry, remonstrance, entreaty, were frequently addressed to them, especially one bearing the early date of 1637,* signed by a number of eminent Non-conformist divines, asking their opinion upon nine points of ecclesiastical discipline and order. In the answer

* Lamson's History of the First Church in Dedham, p. 21.

returned, it is admitted, on the part of the New England churches, that, while they had not departed so far as was reported and charged, "the free air of the wilderness" had wrought some changes, for which they saw good reason; and it is contended that churches should be seekers after truth, and "had still need to grow from defects to purity, and from reformation to reformation, age after age."

It is probable, therefore, that this question about the proper subjects of baptism was early agitated, and perhaps the more liberal opinion and practice in reference to it did at first, to some extent, prevail.

There was no general discussion of the subject till 1662. The synod which met that year adopted the more liberal ground, approved of what was called the half-way, or baptismal covenant, and sanctioned the administration of baptism to children whose parents were not members of the church in full communion. This decision of the synod gave rise to a controversy, conducted on the one hand by President Chauncy of Harvard College, and the Rev. John Davenport, then of New Haven, against the decision, and by the Rev. Mr. Allin of Dedham, and the Rev. Richard Mather of Dorchester, in support of it.

Cotton Mather, in his *Magnalia*, maintains that the propositions of the synod of 1662 would

have been inserted in the celebrated Cambridge Platform, put forth by the synod of 1648, but "for the opposition of one eminent person"; that the Rev. John Norton was in favor of their introduction, but being of "a peaceable temper," he forbore urging them against this opposition, so that when they were asserted by the synod "which met more than twice seven years after, many people did count them novelties," while, in fact, they were old verities, in harmony with the first principles and practices of the New England churches. However this may be, the decision of the synod of 1662 excited a controversy, a difference of opinion and practice in the Congregational churches, which had not subsided when our fathers contemplated the formation of this society.

Another question agitated during this period was that of the relative right of the church and the congregation in the choice of a pastor and the direction of parish affairs. So far as the Puritans, who sought freedom and refuge in this Western wilderness, had any definite plan or policy, it seems to have been that of a spiritual commonwealth, in which religion should be the controlling power of the state. They aimed not at an alliance of church and state, but they made the church the state. Spiritual regeneration and civil right were conjoined. Unless a man was a mem-

ber of the church, he was not a free citizen of the state, had no right to vote in civil matters, and of course none in religious matters. The church, through its members, was to be the head of the state, and through connection with the church the individual was to secure civil privilege and power as a citizen. During the lives of the original emigrants, who were to a man almost members of the church, moved to voluntary exile by religious motive and principle, little objection to this course existed, or was made manifest. But when the second generation came upon the stage, and the number of those who were not members of the church began to increase, and ultimately form the majority in every town and in every congregation, the arbitrary and unequal character of the rule became more and more apparent, and opposition to it was excited. So far as any civil disabilities accompanied non-church-membership they were soon removed, and as early as 1662, in all the Massachusetts plantations, every freeholder, whether church-member or not, was a citizen entitled to vote in the election of magistrates, and to have a voice in all civil affairs. But in ecclesiastical matters, — in the choice of pastors and the direction of parish affairs, — the church struggled for, and for some time retained, first exclusive control, and then the right of taking the initiatory steps, giving its direc-

tion to the action of the congregation. This right of the church was sometimes contested, and sometimes yielded apparently without a struggle; —as in the case of the Rev. Mr. Bowles, who received a call from the church in Dedham, in January, 1685, "the inhabitants voting together without distinction of communicants and non-communicants, it being decided in a general meeting, that 'the church and town will act together as one,' the church taking no separate vote." Another instance of this occurred thirteen years earlier, in 1672, when the Rev. Charles Nicholet was invited to settle over the First Church in Salem, the church and the congregation acting as one in extending the invitation. Another example of the kind is afforded, also, by the First Church in Charlestown, in 1697.* We learn from Cotton Mather, that artifice was sometimes resorted to on the part of the church in order to retain the semblance of power, and of having taken the lead in ecclesiastical measures. Thus, in case of vacancy in the pastoral office, the church would elect three or four of the most popular candidates, so that, on whichsoever of them the choice of the congregation might fall, it could still be said, "The church has chosen him." As the parish, the congrega-

* Lamson's History of the First Church in Dedham, p. 90.

tion, was the party bound to support the clergyman, and every man, whether a church-member or not, had to contribute towards this object, it seems somewhat strange to us now that this question, when all the right and justice seem so manifestly on one side, should have arisen. Yet so it was, and the question was somewhat largely agitated at the time our fathers contemplated the formation of this society.

Another matter which was occasionally agitated during this period, and in respect to which the public mind had undergone some changes, was that of "the public relation of their experience" on the part of those who offered themselves for admission to the church. By many this was thought to be of great importance, and was insisted upon by some churches with inflexible perseverance. Others objected to it, and were disposed to discontinue it, or to leave it optional with the individual. The number of communicants was gradually, but surely, growing smaller in proportion to the congregation; and it was justly thought that the custom of requiring a public relation of experience tended to keep from the church and communion-table many timid, modest, and worthy persons. In many minds, also, the argument against it was one not only of expediency, but of right. They regarded it as an unjustifiable assumption on the part of the church, to impose this public relation of religious experience.

The most appropriate mode of conducting the services of public worship began at this period to attract some attention. Indications were manifested of a readiness to adopt some changes that should give to these services more variety and interest.

As is usual in all cases of contest and separation, the Puritan Non-conformists, in leaving the Church of England, swung far to the other extreme, and in matters insignificant, as well as in those of moment, aimed to mark their separation by as wide a difference as possible. In the English Church service the Scriptures were largely read. Nearly all the Psalms were repeated once a month, and lessons from the Old and New Testament marked out for every Sunday in the year. The Puritans would have none of this. They discarded altogether the reading of the Scriptures in public worship. These Scriptures could be read by each individual at home, in such portions as his taste, judgment, or spiritual wants might dictate. In the English Church service, also, there were various, and, as they thought, unnecessarily multiplied prayers, together with the frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and, interspersed with these, a large amount of singing and chanting. The Puritans disliked all this; they would have their mode of public worship as distinct as possible.

They would not use the Lord's Prayer at all in public worship, and to do so soon came in their judgment to savor of prelacy. They would have but one prayer and one singing, and as for the rest, they would have the services of public worship what they ought to be, — not "vain repetitions" before God, who was "not to be worshipped with men's hands as though he needed any thing," but the instruction of the people in truth and righteousness. The sermon, the discussion and enforcement of sound doctrine and godly living, — this was the prominent point with the Puritans in the religious services of the Lord's day.

The facts to which I have just alluded may help to throw some light upon a matter that has often excited surprise, and filled some hearts with the apprehension that the piety of these modern days has grown cold, has little internal heat, namely, the patience with which our fathers listened to sermons which not infrequently went far into the second hour. But when we consider that there was no reading of the Scriptures in public worship, and commonly but one prayer and one singing, it may be that the whole time occupied did not very much exceed what is now devoted to these services.

Be this as it may, when the second generation came upon the stage, who had received only by in-

heritance, and not by actual contact, the prejudices which their fathers entertained towards any thing resembling what was termed "prelatic modes of worship," the dryness and monotony of the strictly Puritan mode began to be felt. Some changes suggested themselves as desirable. It was thought that the reading of a portion of Scripture, with brief occasional expositions by the pastor, would tend to increase the interest and the edification of the public religious services of the Lord's day. It was found that music had its power and its place as an instrument of religious impression and spiritual growth, and that some improvement and more use might wisely be made of this instrument. It does not appear that there was any discussion of these matters, nor can I ascertain that any changes in this respect were introduced before the establishment of this society; but there are indications of a disposition, a readiness, to make some changes.

I have been thus particular in the view I have presented, because it seemed to me to be necessary in order to a complete understanding of the circumstances under which this church originated, and a just appreciation of the credit due to those who undertook the enterprise, and carried it forward to a successful accomplishment. This object clearly was to found a religious society in which the liberal side on all the questions which

have been considered should be established and maintained. But they were not the first to assert, and to some extent act upon, these liberal opinions and principles. I had all along supposed, before studying the subject with some care, that the founders of this church were the first to assert in ecclesiastical matters the principle which is now held so sacred both in civil and ecclesiastical affairs, that all who were taxed should vote; that all who contributed to the support of the pastor should have a voice in his election, and in the direction of parish affairs. But this was clearly not the case, as, in three several instances during the fifteen years previous to the formation of this society, this principle had been asserted and acted upon. And perhaps, were all the records of the early New England churches examined, several other instances might be found. The same may be said of the other points. The liberal side of these had been advocated, if not adopted and acted upon. There had been a gradual progress of liberal sentiment. The rigor of Calvinistic Puritanism had somewhat abated after the death of the generation to whom it was precious through persecutions endured in its behalf, and into whose souls it had, as it were, been branded with a red-hot iron. "The free air of the wilderness" had had its effect upon those who had breathed it from infancy or early youth.

Their minds, untrammelled by the prejudices and no longer restrained by the presence and influence of those who came over in the Mayflower in 1620, or with Higginson and Skelton in 1629, or with Winthrop in 1630, were free to adopt what seemed to them good in the forms and institutions of religion. Through the gradual progress of public opinion, the way was prepared for the adoption of some changes and improvements in these things; and the merit of our fathers in this matter, I conceive, is this, — that they seized the right moment and the right way to make these changes. They sought not to breed dissension and disunion in any existing society, to interfere with and overthrow its established order and customs. They sought not to introduce too extensive and radical changes, not to be in advance of their age, but to be up with it, to lead it wisely to principles and measures just and reasonable in themselves, and which it was not indisposed or unprepared to adopt. Their high object was to found a new Christian Congregational church, upon the broad, catholic, but conservative principles of Congregationalism, — a church in which a just liberty and privilege should be allowed to all, and nothing imposed upon any individual, beyond what was necessary to the constitution of any social religious institution, and the public administration of the Christian ordinances.

They aimed not, as is sometimes the case in the formation of new societies at the present day, to hold out the idea that there was something very peculiar in the character of their society, something in the principles of its organization and contemplated modes of action making it altogether distinct and different from others, but rather to show the extent of their union and harmony with others, and that, in the particulars in which they saw "cause to depart from what is ordinarily professed and practised by the churches of Christ here in New England," there was no just ground for suspicion and jealousy towards them.

This suspicion and jealousy were indeed entertained. They met with distrust, if not with strong opposition. Though the "*undertakers*," as they style themselves, were men of high standing and character, men of substance and influence, some of them holding important official station, — though it is probable, from a comparison of names, that portions of them had previously been connected with one or another of the three societies then existing in the town, — it does not appear that their enterprise met with any encouragement or sympathy from either of the ministers of these societies. So much ignorance and prejudice prevailed in relation to the movement, that in November, 1699, a few weeks before their church was dedicated, the "*undertakers*" published "A Mani-

festo or Declaration," setting forth their aims and designs, together with the principles and rules they intended by God's grace to adhere unto. The original of this important document is not on the files, nor in the records, of the church. It was printed on "a half folio sheet," in a convenient form for circulation, and in this way distributed to the churches. Dr. Palfrey, in a note to his sermon, says, he had "not been able to find an original copy of it," but used a manuscript copy made by the late Judge Thacher in 1807. Since that time a copy of the original publication has been discovered, and is now in my hands. As it was found among the papers of a clergyman long since deceased, formerly pastor of one of the Congregational churches at the North End, it is not impossible that it may have found its way into his possession from the files of the Second Church, and be, therefore, the original copy sent by the undertakers to the pastor of that church, then worshipping at the head of North Square. As this document, of no little interest and importance in the history of this church, is known to but few of my hearers, I shall read it from the original copy to which I have just referred. Thus it begins: —

A

MANIFESTO

OR

Declaration,

Set forth by the Undertakers of the

New Church

Now Erected in *Boston* in *New-England*, *November* 17*th*. 1699.

INASMVCH as GOD hath put it into our hearts to undertake the Building a New Meeting-House *in this Town for His Publick Worship; And whereas through the gracious Smiles of Divine Providence on this our Vndertaking, We now see the same Erected, and near Finished: We think it Convenient, for preventing all Misapprehensions and Jealousies, to publish our Aims and Designs herein, together with those Principles and Rules we intend by GODS Grace to adhere unto.*

We do therefore as in the Presence of GOD our Judge, and with all the Sincerity and Seriousness, which the nature of our present Engagement Commands from us, Profess and Declare both to one another, and to all the World, *as follows.*

[*I.*]

First of all, We approve and subscribe the *Confession of Faith* put forth by the Assembly of Divines at *Westminster*.

[*II.*]

We design only the true and pure Worship of GOD, according to the Rules appearing plainly to us in His Word ; Conformably to the known practice of many of the Churches of the UNITED BRETHREN in *London*, and throughout all *England*.

We judge it therefore most suitable and convenient, that in our Publick Worship some part of the Holy Scripture be read by the Minister at his discretion.

In all other parts of Divine Worship as (Prayer, Singing, Preaching, Blessing the People, and Administring the Sacraments ;) We conform to the ordinary practice of the Churches of Christ in this Country.

[*III.*]

It is our sincere desire and intention to hold Communion with the Churches here, as true Churches ; and we openly protest against all Suspicion and Jealousie to the contrary, as most Injurious to us.

[*IV.*]

And although in some Circumstances we may vary from many of them; yet we joyntly profess to maintain such Order and Rules of Discipline as may preserve, as far as in us lies, Evangelical Purity and Holiness in our Communion.

[*V.*]

In pursuance whereof we further Declare, that we allow of Baptism to those only who profess their Faith in Christ and Obedience to him, and to the Children of such; yet we dare not refuse it to *any* Child offered to us by *any* professed Christian, upon his engagement to see it Educated, if God give life and ability, in the Christian Religion.

But this being a Ministerial Act, We think it the Pastors Province to receive such Professions and Engagements; in whose prudence and conscience we acquiesce.

[*VI.*]

As to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, we believe that as the Ordinance is Holy, so the Partakers in it (that it may not be visibly profaned) must be persons of visible Sanctity.

[*VII.*]

We judge it therefore fitting and expedient,

that whoever would be admitted to partake with us in this Holy Sacrament, be accountable to the Pastor to whom it belongs to inquire into their knowledge and Spiritual State, and to require the Renewal of their Baptismal Covenant.

[*VIII.*]

But we assume not to our selves to impose upon any a Publick Relation of their Experiences; however if any one think himself bound in Conscience to make such a Relation, let him do it.

For we conceive it sufficient, if the Pastor publickly declare himself satisfied in the person offered to our Communion, and seasonably Propound him.

[*IX.*]

We also think our selves obliged in faithfulness to God, our own Souls, and theirs who seek our Communion, to inquire into the life and conversation of those who are so propounded; and if we have just matter of objection to prefer it against them.

[*X.*]

But if no objection be made, before the time of their standing propounded is expired, it shall be esteemed a sufficient Consent and Concur-

rence of the Brethren, and the person propounded shall be received to our Communion.

[*XI.*]

If ever any of our Communion should be so unhappy as to fall into any scandalous Sin (which God by his Grace prevent) we profess all dutiful submission to those Censures, which the Scripture directs, and the Churches here practice.

[*XII.*]

Forasmuch as the same power that *Admits*, should also *Exclude*, We judge it reasonable, that the Pastor in Suspending or Excommunicating an Offender, have the consent and concurrence of the Brethren.

[*XIII.*]

We apprehend that a particular Church, as such, is a Society of Christians by mutual agreement, usually meeting together for Publick Worship in the same place, and under the same Ministry, attending on the Ordinances of God there.

[*XIV.*]

In every such Society, the Law of nature dictates to us, that there is implied a mutual promise and engagement of being faithful to the Relations they bear to each other, whither as

private Christians, or as Pastor and Flock, so long as the Providence of God continues them in those Relations.

[*XV.*]

We moreover Declare our selves for Communion of Churches, freely allowing our Members occasionally to Communicate with other Churches of Christ, and receiving theirs occasionally to the Table of the Lord with us. And in extraordinary cases, when the Providence of God makes it needful, we conceive that any Authorized Minister of Christ, may upon our request, Administer the Sacraments unto us.

[*XVI.*]

Finally, We cannot confine the right of chusing a Minister to the Male Communicants alone, but we think that every Baptized Adult Person who contributes to the Maintenance, should have a Vote in Electing.

Yet it seems but just, that persons of the greatest Piety, Gravity, Wisdom, Authority or other Endowments, should be leading and Influential to the Society in that Affair.

THESE are the Principles we Profess, and the Rules we purpose through the Grace of G O D, to govern our selves by ; and in some

of these particulars only, and in no other, do we see cause to depart from what is ordinarily Professed and Practised by the Churches of CHRIST here in *New-England.*

There is nothing that determines the authorship of this Manifesto or Declaration; the inference that its publication was suggested by Dr. Colman, and that it was prepared by him, seems to be sustained by the circumstances of the case. The association of "Undertakers," who were to carry forward the enterprise of building a church and forming a new religious society in the town, had now been in existence nearly two years. From the beginning, the movement had been regarded with coldness and distrust; but so far as we can learn, no public declaration had been made to satisfy public curiosity as to its character and purpose, or remove the ignorance that existed or the prejudice that had been awakened against it. Dr. Colman had been invited to become the pastor of the society, and arrived in this country from England on the 1st of November. On the 19th of that month, the Manifesto was published. As it had not been done before, when there was equal occasion for it, and was done so soon after his arrival, it seems to be a natural inference to trace the doing of it now to his mind. A man of great practical wisdom,

of large discernment, he saw at once the necessity of such a public declaration, both for his own reputation and standing among the New England clergy, and for the prosperity and the just appreciation of the church of which he was to be pastor and the society whose temporal and spiritual prosperity he was to labor to promote. The result justified the correctness of his judgment. The Manifesto, so full and explicit upon the most important points both of theology and of church order and discipline, at once enlightened the public mind as to the character and principles of the new society. It led to a sharp controversy, indeed, in which several interesting tracts or pamphlets were published. Of the two most important of them, one was entitled, "*The Order of the Gospel*"; the other, a reply to it, was entitled, "*Gospel Order Revived.*" The former was prepared by Dr. Increase Mather, and made its appearance early in January, 1700, about two months after the Manifesto was published, the principles of which are stated in the Dedicatory Epistle, and, together with some others, elaborately controverted in the work. The other, "Gospel Order Revived," was published in the course of the following spring or summer, and purports to have been prepared "by sundry Ministers of the Gospel in New England." It is presumed to have been principally from the pen of Colman,

aided by the Rev. Messrs. Bradstreet of Charlestown and Woodbridge of Hartford. Several other similar publications followed these, in the course of the next two or three years, all of them making reference, more or less direct, to the Manifesto, and the principles adopted and practised upon by this church. In a manuscript volume entitled "Colman Papers," preserved in the library of the Massachusetts Historical Society, may be found, among other interesting documents, a letter of admonition and rebuke, addressed to the "Undertakers" by the Salem ministers, Higginson and Noyes. This letter, which ought to have been preserved on the files of this church, with whose early history it is so intimately connected, serves also to illustrate the character of the times and the relative position of the clergy. I have, therefore, obtained leave of the Historical Society to publish the following copy of it: —

"To the Gentlemen, the authors and owners of the Declaration, set forth by those who call themselves the Undertakers of the new church now erected in Boston, in New England, November 19th, 1699. We, the ministers of Salem, having received the said declaration from Captain Benjamin Davis, think it our duty to offer our advice; and do humbly offer it in the follow-

ing particulars, praying that it may be considered in the fear of God.

"1. We advise you that the word Manifesto in the frontispiece is offensive, it being a sovereign, imperious word, and whatever it signify in its native etymology, yet in its common use it signifies the declaration of a prince or state about public affairs, and often for showing the reason of their taking up arms. Though we believe you intended it not so, yet it is too much that it looks like it, and needs to be removed. It is an humbling consideration in such an undertaking to stumble at the threshold.

"2. We cannot but think you might have entered upon your declaration with more reverence and humility than so solemnly to appeal to God, your judge, that you do it with all the sincerity and seriousness the nature of your engagement commands from you; seeing you were most of you much unstudied in the controversial points of church order and discipline, and yet did not advise with the neighboring churches or elders; but with a great deal of confidence and freedom, set up by yourselves. Sirs! how could you forsake the dear churches some of you belonged to, whose breasts you had sucked, and on whose knees you had been dandled, without dropping one tear for it in your declaration? How could you forsake the footsteps of the flock, the prac-

tice of the churches in New England in such and so many instances, yea, and the principles of the united ministers in Old England also? Truly, Sirs, if you did it without much seeking of God by fasting and prayer, without much fear and trembling, without the most mature deliberation of your own, and without much advising with others that were at least as likely to know the mind of God as yourselves, you were not so serious and sincere as they had need to be who appeal to the heart-searching God as their judge.

"3. We cannot conceal from you how we resent your making a church and church-members without so much as making a public and personal profession of your repentance toward God and your faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and without a public and personal giving up yourselves to God in Christ, according to the covenant of his grace. If any such thing had been, we should surely have found something of it in the 4th, 8th, 12th, or 13th article; but there is nothing of this public and personal profession and covenanting so much as hinted, but rather the needlessness of it implied: if we understand those articles, Sirs, how is it you did not consider that the followers of the Lamb on Mount Zion have his Father's name written in their foreheads? (Rev. xiv. 1.) Hath God promised to bring any to his holy mountain and to make them

joyful in his house of prayer unless they take hold of his covenant? See Isaiah vi. 4, 5, 6. See also Jeremiah l. 5, 'They shall go the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten,' compared with Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 'Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people,' &c. See also Deut. xxix. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 'You stand this day all of you before the Lord your God, that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, that he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself,' &c. See also 2 Cor. xi. 2. Doth not espousing the church of Corinth to Christ plainly imply a covenant and contract? Is not the Church subsequently called the bride, the spouse, the wife of Christ? Surely explicitly covenanting is ordinarily necessary to the well-being, not the being, of the Church.

"4. It seemeth by your 5th article, you allow baptism to parents and their children on lighter terms than the public personal profession and covenanting before spoken of; which we apprehend to be contrary to the foregoing texts and many others.

"5. For aught we can see to the contrary, you do, in the 5th article, contradict yourselves,

as well as us, for after you have expressed you allow baptism only to such and such, you say you do not deny it to others also, and that in such words as will admit of godfathers and godmothers in the utmost latitude, and so at length all will be promiscuously baptized.

"6. After lax, and as we judge too lax, admission to sacraments, the discipline you expound seemeth to us too slender and remiss, seeing you allow the brethren no more in suspending and excommunicating than you had before in admitting, and yet have no consistory of elders among yourselves, nor say any thing of any help you expect from neighboring elders or churches, in the most difficult cases. You seem to us to put more confidence in your pastor than is meet to be put in any one man living.

"7. Though you speak of communion of churches, you seem to take it in a very restrained sense, as if communion of churches extended no farther than communion of members at the Lord's table and of ministers in sacramental administration, having omitted in your declaration, and in your practice (as we are informed), the seeking the right hand of fellowship of neighbor churches to your church and of neighboring elders to your pastor, which to us seemeth very unaccountable, and that neither yourselves nor your minister have sufficiently considered the danger of being alone. Eccl. iv. 9, 10, 11, 12.

"8. Seeing the Lord Jesus was faithful in his house as a son, and we have the mind of Christ in the Holy Scriptures, you might have found some other direction and obligation to relative duties between pastor and flock, and brother and brother, besides the dictates of the law of nature; and yet, when the law of nature was dictating, we see no reason why it should not dictate that an explicit mutual promise and agreement about relative duties would be more effectual to obtain the end. There is a little book (called 'Spiritual Milk for Boston Babes, drawn out of the Breasts of both Testaments'), which had a great author, and many of you had special reason to regard; that, with the Scriptures annexed in the margin, might have been very helpful to you in defining a particular church, and about the obligations to relative duties; to which we refer you, praying you to consider the questions with their answers, and the Scriptures produced for proof annexed in the margin, — beginning at that question, 'What is the church?' and so forward.

"9. It seemeth to us by your 13th and 14th articles, that if a member of your society should be so unholy, as well as unhappy, as to fall into any scandalous sin, and should then forsake the town, or forsake attending the public worship of God in your assembly, he would no longer be subject to the discipline of Christ in your church;

for by his withdrawing, he ceaseth to be a member of your church; and consequently not subject to any censure by your pastor. The consequence seemeth to us as intolerable as unavoidable.

"10. Your last article must needs be offensive, seeing it has a direct tendency to subvert the ministry and grace and order and liberty of all the churches in the land, and that whether the word *male* be in or out. If it be in, the females are certainly more than the males, and consequently the choice of ministers is put into their hands; nor doth the blotting out of the word *male* wholly remove the objection; for a female is a person, as well as a male; but supposing nothing of that be insisted upon, yet it is certain the baptized adult non-communicants, in most if not all the assemblies in the land, are more than the communicants, and consequently, if they should take their rule and manners from this article, they might make worse work in all the churches than we are willing to say. But we hope better things.

"11. Was it fair to give notice to the world, that you see cause to depart from some things that are ordinarily professed and practised in the churches of New England, before you had informed the churches of what was offensive to you, and offered conviction to them by the word of God that there was cause so to do? How did you know

but by that means you might have let in such light into their souls, as might have persuaded them to have forsaken their own principles and practices as well as you do? If you could have convinced them that they were evil, they would certainly have done so, for they do not pretend for perfection in knowledge. However you had endeavored it, you would have been more excusable in departing from them; or had you used such means, they might possibly and more probably have convinced you that the way you were going in was not safe and good, and if so, that surely had been better than to rush on in an evil way. The word of God requires us, if it be possible, to live peaceably with all men, and surely then to live peaceably with all the churches, if it be possible. Did you well consider whether emitting the Manifesto was the most likely way to live peaceably with all the churches? Can you in cool blood think that nothing else could possibly have been done more likely to have made or maintained peace between the churches and yourselves, and if so, have you not cause to regret that you did any thing or omitted any thing, that having been done or omitted, peace might have been maintained?

"12. We might also inquire why you did not give notice to the world that you departed from the principles of the United Ministers in Old

England, seeing it is certain you do, as whoever is impartial shall find, if he compare your declaration with the Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational; particularly let it be compared with the 3d, 4th, and 5th articles n the chapter of the Ministry, and with the 1st, 4th, 5th, and 6th in the chapter of Communion of Churches, and with the 1st article of Occasional Meetings of Ministers. Sirs, had you but contained yourselves within the limits of the Heads of Agreement assented to by the United Ministers, you might have assured yourselves of the right hand of fellowship between your pastor and other pastors, and your church and other churches, and how easily might you so have done; and thereby one instance might have been given that, notwithstanding lesser differences, brethren may dwell together in unity, and that it is good and meet to do so. This would have been like precious ointment on the head of Aaron, that ran down on his beard, and so to his pectoral, that perfumed and influenced all the tribes whose names were therein. This would have been as the dew on Hermon, yea, as the dew on Zion, where God commanded the blessing, even life for ever more. But alas! we cannot now but fear it will be far otherwise, unless God shall persuade you to revoke your Manifesto, or ex-

plain it to satisfaction, by adjusting matters between yourselves and neighboring elders and churches, by free consultation and conference with them, to such a temper, at least, as may conform to the Heads of Agreement above mentioned ; — that so the right hand of fellowship may be given to your pastor by other pastors, and to your church by other churches, and that you may not be the beginning of a schism that will dishonor God, grieve the good people, and be a matter of triumph to the bad. So we pray you take in good part what we have pre sented and freely offered to you as the best advice that is with us. We assure you we have not done this out of any design or desire to grieve you, but out of a design and desire to benefit you, and to keep our consciences void of offence toward God and toward man ; and we beseech you, out of regard to the name of God and the purity of his worship, and the peace of his churches, and your own souls, that you lay to heart what hath been offered to your consideration by ourselves, or may have been offered by any of our brethren in the ministry, especially your neighboring elders, that, being on the spot, may be capable of giving you better advice than we can ; and may personally confer with you about these things, which we cannot. We have nothing further to add at present, but shall not cease to pray that

While the general controversy, of which I have given this brief account, was excited by the Manifesto, its immediate effect upon the

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Church, because they put forth an account of their designed variations from some things practised in the New England Churches, which they themselves call a Manifesto. And afterwards there came forth a Book entitled, Gospel Order Revived, written by several Ministers of the Gospel, supposed to be Mr. Woodbridge, Mr. Bradstreet, and Mr. Colman. Upon which there were some very harsh passages, and several cantering Rhythms came forth. Some of which, for their oddness and archness, I shall insert. One parcel of verses upon the aforesaid Book, the author calls 'A Simple Poem upon the Authors and their Design,' and runs thus.

Begging Manifesto, proves but a great *Pesto*
  Blackman[1] is Synodalian.
Pray stay there and stop, lest next hop and hop
  Ben't Peter's Chair Italian.
The old Strait Gate is now out of date,
  The street it must be Broad[2]
And the *Bridge*[3] must be Wood, tho' not half so good
  As firm stone in the road.
Relations are Rattles with Brattle and Brattle,
  Lord Bro'r mayn't command,
But Mather and Mather had rather had rather
  The good old way should stand.
Saints Cotton and Hooker, Oh look down and look here
  Where 's Platform, Way and the Keys?
Oh Torrey with Story of Brattle Church Tetele
  To have things as they please.
Our Merchants cum Mico do stand sacro vico
  Our Churches turn genteel
Our Parsons grow trim and trig with Wealth, Wine and Wig
  And their heads are covered with meal.

[1] Colman. [2] Bradstreet. [3] Woodbridge.

ministers and societies in the town seems to have been favorable. Hitherto on the part of these societies no sympathy or interest had been

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"Upon which there came out the following answer: —

And now my friend Thomas, according to promise
  Im'e come and hope shall be welcome,
For I know you use to desire all the news,
  And now I think I can tell some.
'There 's lately come in here, a whip for the sinner
  That doth leave the old way, or despise it;
The Author, if you know him, says, 't is a simple Poem,
  And in good truth I don't think he belies it.

. . . . .

Having heated his Noddle, with a dram of the Bottle
  Then hey for the top of Parnassus.
He 's so set on rhyming, bell ringing and chiming
  The which for a grace to his rhymes take
That saints Hooker and Cotton, tho' both dead and rotten,
  Must out from their graves for the rhymes sake.

. . . . .

His designs to be arch in 't, appears in the Margent
  On which the kind Reader must look,
Or else he 'd be witty, and that would be a pity,
  And no body find out the Joke.
And thus our Lord Broth[r] doth fully discover
  The authors and all their design,
For which I suppose the thanks of the House
  Will be sent, when they meet the next time."

If they illustrate nothing else, the foregoing lines will show what could get printed as poetry one hundred and fifty years ago. The journalist adds, — "Thus the quarrels about Religion give occasion to scoffing wits. And therefore a small matter should not set us together by the Ears; for a victory wont countervail the Damage; and it is well that that controversy is since comfortably settled."

expressed in the new society, and none of their ministers came forward to welcome Dr. Colman to his field of labor, or participate with him in the dedication and opening services at his church. But we find that, not many weeks after the publication of the "Manifesto," they all united at the request of this church in "keeping a day of prayer." "Wednesday, the 31st of January," say the Records, "was separated by us for public imploring the presence of God with us, his pardon and blessing." On this occasion the ministers of the Congregational churches in the town took some part in the services, Dr. Colman preaching in the morning and Dr. Increase Mather in the afternoon. Whether their union in keeping this day of prayer was the effect of the Manifesto, or the result of the better feelings of the ministers, and their conviction that the success of the enterprise could no longer be prevented by any coldness or opposition on their part, or whether it was brought about by the interposition of friends, cannot be clearly determined. Probably each of these causes had its influence, though the result is chiefly to be attributed, I apprehend, to the mediation of friends; —since it is clearly shown by a letter, in the manuscript volume of "Colman Papers," to which reference has been made, (which letter ought also to be on the files of our church,) that

the invitation to unite in a day of prayer was at first refused, unless this church would withdraw its Manifesto, and adopt the Platform of the United Brethren of London; — and in a passage in the records, immediately preceding the account of the day of "public prayer," Dr. Colman says, "I omit on purpose the differences and troubles we had with our neighbors about our providings, only am obliged to leave this acknowledgment of our great obligation to the Hon. William Stoughton, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, the Rev. William Brattle of Cambridge, the Rev. Mr. Clarke of Chelmsford, and Mr. Danforth of Dorchester, for their good and kind endeavors for our peaceable settlement."

Some time elapsed, however, before Dr. Colman was on terms of intimate communion and fellowship with the other churches of the town, and for several years the church was designated, in scorn and derision, by a title of which neither then nor now has it any cause to be ashamed, — "the Manifesto Church."

In giving this account of the "Manifesto" and its results, I have anticipated some things in relation to the call of Rev. Benjamin Colman to become the pastor of the society. The germ of the society, as has been intimated, was formed as early as January, 1698, at which time Thomas Clarke and his associates became possessed of a piece of land with a view to erect thereupon a

house of worship. At what time this work was commenced cannot be ascertained, but early in the summer of 1699, in prospect of the completion of the house in the autumn, those interested in the enterprise, who had hitherto, as seems probable, worshipped at the churches to which they severally belonged, made arrangements for the establishment of a permanent ministry, by inviting the Rev. Benjamin Colman, then in England, to become their pastor. Mr. Colman was a native of this town. His parents were members of the Second Church, and he himself had there made his early Christian vows. Of himself and his call to be the pastor of this church, he gives the following account in the opening paragraph of our records: — "I had been absent from this my native country upwards of four years, employed as a candidate for the evangelical ministry, to which my parents and my own choice devoted me; occasionally preaching in the city of London, the University of Cambridge, and the town of Ipswich, in England, for about the space of two years, and then more statedly had been appointed by the Presbyterian board at London, to be the minister of the Dissenting Congregation in the city of Bath, Somersetshire; when, on the 19th day of July, 1699, I received an invitation * from the gentlemen, the under-

* No copy of this letter of invitation is to be found in the records or on the files of this church. Hearing that a copy of

takers of this church, subscribed by Mr. Thomas Brattle, Captain Benjamin Davis, Mr. John Mico, Mr. Thomas Cooper, and Mr. John Colman, in the name of the rest, to come over to be their minister, only proposing to me, that

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it was in the possession of the Rev. Alexander McClure of Malden, I applied and readily obtained from him permission to use it in this publication. It is as follows: —

"*Boston, May* 10, 1699.

"MR. BENJAMIN COLMAN: —

"Much respected Sir, — Before writing the following votes, which will satisfy you both of the nature and design of them, and how we came to be concerned therein, we judge it may not be amiss to give you an account of the first rise and progress of our undertaking, until we came unto this result. These few lines may therefore acquaint you, that about twenty of us, considering the great need there was of another meeting-house in the town, did, in October last, undertake, with God's help, to build one in Brattle Close, so called, near the town dock, where most of us lived. We imparted our design first to the Lieutenant-Governor and ministers, and then petitioned both the townsmen and justices, and the Lieutenant-Governor and Council, for leave to build with timber, which they readily granted us. At the first meeting it was resolved the relations should be laid aside, and the Holy Scriptures publicly read in the church, and on the 29th of October, Mr. John Colman, understanding we had thought of yourself for our minister, did join with us, on condition we gave you a call thereunto. Soon after this we agreed for the building of said meeting-house, which is to be raised by the first of August, and finished by the first of October next. The last month the timber was brought to town and begun to be framed; and now, thinking it high time to conclude on a minister, on the 2d instant there was a general meeting of the undertakers, where, after we had every one

the Holy Scriptures might be publicly read every Sabbath in the worship of God, and that they might lay aside the relation of experiences, which were imposed in the other churches in the town, in order to the admission of persons to the Lord's Table.

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of us subscribed a paper, wherein it is declared we have no design to depart from the doctrine and order of the Gospel, or from the practice of the churches of Christ in New England, only leaving the matter of relations indifferent, as we, with several churches in New England, do apprehend them to be, it was, after mature deliberation, unanimously voted, — 1. That Mr. Benjamin Colman be addressed with an invitation to come over hither in order to be the minister of the church which we are now erecting; and 2. That in case Mr. Benjamin Colman, complying with our principles which shall be sent him, shall come over upon the invitation, and we shall not agree to settle him among us, we will then satisfy him for all the loss and damage he shall sustain by his answering our invitation to his full content. 3. That Mr. John Mico, Mr. John Colman, Mr. Benjamin Davis, Mr. Thomas Cooper, and Mr. T. Brattle do write to Mr. Benjamin Colman by the first opportunity, in behalf of the undertakers; and 4. That Mr. Benjamin Colman be desired to use his utmost endeavors to be ordained a minister of the Gospel by some Non-conformist ministers in England. Accordingly, Sir, we do hereby signify to you the desire of the undertakers, and in their name we do heartily invite you hither to be the minister of our church, promising and obligating ourselves, in case of your compliance with our call, if we do not settle you among us, which there is no doubt upon, that we will satisfy you for all the damage you shall receive thereby. We are all of us very desirous that you be ordained before you come over by some Non-conformist ministers in England, the more eminent they are, the better it may be. The great character which every one gives of your good temper, principles, and abilities

"The invitation was accepted by me; and the more acceptable it was by reason of the kind and encouraging letters which accompanied it from my excellent friends, the Hon. Mr. John Leverett, the Rev. William Brattle, Ebenezer Pemberton, Simon Bradstreet, and others.*

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doth abundantly satisfy us in our choice, and make us the more earnestly to address you with this invitation, which we pray you will favor us with your acceptance of, and coming to us so soon as ever your affairs will permit. You may be assured of all due respect and encouragement from us becoming your place and merit; for although our votes may seem too short in some particulars, we intend nothing but what is not only just but honorable. God, who has inclined our hearts to so great an undertaking, and to make choice of yourself for our minister, and has therein graciously smiled on us hitherto, seems in his providence to have designed you for his service among us, and will, as we trust in his goodness, by inclining your heart to accept of this our invitation, perfect what he has thus far so wonderfully brought about, to his glory and our mutual happiness and comfort. In the hopes and persuasion thereof we shall add no more, but our prayers that God Almighty will bless you and make your way to us prosperous in his good time. We salute you in behalf of the undertakers, and subscribe ourselves, Sir, your assured friends and servants,

"T. Brattle,
Benjamin Davis,
John Mico,
Thomas Cooper,
John Colman."

* The following extracts from some of these letters will show the high estimation in which Mr. Colman was held, and the strong desire felt by some of the most eminent men of that day that he should accept the invitation of the "Under-

"Being arrived at London, August 1st, 1699, I asked ordination of the Presbytery there, and on the fourth day of said month the solemnity

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takers" of Brattle Street Church. Rev. Ebenezer Pemberton writes: —

"With this you will receive a kind invitation to return to your own country, which you cannot but have a great tenderness for, and your affection I trust will constrain you to comply, and hope it will not be to your disadvantage. The gentlemen who solicit your return are mostly known to you, — men of repute and figure, from whom you may expect generous treatment; and among them I doubt not but you may be peculiarly serviceable to the Lord Jesus Christ, which is the height of your ambition. I believe your return will be pleasing to all friends of religion. I am sure it will be inexpressibly so to your unfeigned friend and servant."

Rev. William Brattle writes: —

"This waits upon you with my desires and hopes that your circumstances will allow you to entertain and accept the invitation. The good respect the Boston ministers have for you (as well as others) should, methinks, encourage your embracing the motion now made to you. As for my own part, I shall account it a smile from Heaven upon the good design of these gentlemen, if you can send them answer of peace, and would hope that your so doing will result to your mutual rejoicing. May God direct you in the matter. Your real friend and servant."

President Leverett writes thus at the close of his letter: —

"I shall exceedingly rejoice at your return unto your country. We want persons of your character. The affair offered to your consideration is of the greatest moment. I pray Almighty God to be your director in it. Your return is heartily desired by all that I have heard speak of it, but it cannot be more agreeable to any body than it is to, Sir, your sincere friend and humble servant."

was attended, after a public lecture, at the meeting-house of the Rev. Mr. Christopher Taylor, to whom I succeeded in Bath. I was ordained by prayer with the imposition of the hands of the Rev. Richard Stratton, John Spademan, Robert Fleming, and Christopher Taylor. Mr. Stratton prayed, Mr. Spademan made the exhortation. From many other reverend ministers I received testimonials of my good conversation while in England. . . . . .

"On Wednesday, the 1st of November, 1699, I arrived at Boston, through the favor of God. The next day the undertakers invited me to a full meeting at my brother's house. A few days after, Mr. Brattle presented me with fifty pounds in money in the name of the undertakers. Soon after, we kept a day of thanksgiving in private to Almighty God for the many smiles of his providence on our undertaking unto that day. I preached from 1 Chron. xxix. 13, 14, 'Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.'"

This, then, was the first religious service of this society, this the first sermon preached before it. Mr. Colman, having been ordained for this work in London, was now the minister of the

society in Brattle Square, which three weeks subsequently occupied its pleasant new-built church, and became one of the established, and soon one of the most flourishing, societies of the town.

I have thus presented to my hearers a full view of the circumstances under which this church originated, and the principles upon which it was founded. We perceive that, as regards theological doctrine, no departure was made by this church from the system of religious belief then commonly received. The society adopted at the beginning the confession of faith put forth by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, which, with the Catechism prepared by the Assembly, was then universally, as it is now by a large majority of the Congregational churches of New England, regarded as the embodiment and concentration of the great doctrines of the Bible. The points in respect to which this church departed from others related entirely to order and worship, and of these but four were of any great moment; — 1st. The reading of some portion of Holy Scripture in public worship at the discretion of the minister; 2d. The administration of baptism to the children of any parents who would make a genuine profession of their Christian faith and their desire and purpose to educate their children therein; 3d. The relinquishment of the relation of experiences; and 4th. The permission of

all the members of the congregation, without distinction of communicants and non-communicants, to act and vote in parish affairs. I have also received it by tradition from my predecessor, that the minister of this church was expected or required to repeat the Lord's Prayer once in some part of the service every Sunday. And accordingly I have always observed this rule, though I have not found any authority for it but tradition, which, as it came to me so, I suppose has been handed down from pastor to pastor. The forms of religious worship are in one aspect of no importance. They are but the drapery of religion, and if the drapery be decent and proper, it matters not what may be its texture and pattern. God cares not in what language the prayer be offered, nor what posture the body assumes. He looketh to the heart, and if there be sincerity, devotion, an earnest and quickened spirit there, they make the form, whatever it may be, acceptable in his sight. But in another aspect, the forms adopted or established for the administration of religion are important, in so far as they may affect or involve the rights of individual Christians. This was the case with some of the forms objected to and laid aside by the founders of this society; as, for example, the requisition of the relation of experiences before admission to the church, the refusal of baptism to children whose

parents were not communicants, and the exclusion of non-communicants from vote or voice in the direction of parish affairs, except as they might act in confirmation of what the church had done. In these cases important personal Christian rights and privileges were involved in matters of form and order, and we have reason to honor our fathers, that they stood firm "for the liberty wherewith Christ hath made men free," and established here a church, liberal, yet conservative, uniting freedom and order, a wide privilege of the individual with the rights and progress of the whole body. It is not surprising that a church founded upon these principles should soon become large and flourishing, or that it should have enjoyed, as we shall find in tracing its history, a large measure of peace and prosperity.

Having thus noticed the progress of the society, from the earliest movements in its behalf to its regular establishment in its new house under its first minister, I shall here leave the subject for the present. Let me remind you, in conclusion, that, as we are completing the third half-century of our existence as a society, so we are completing another year of our lives as individuals. We have been reviewing the long gone past as connected with the deeds of our fathers ; let us also review it, each for himself, as it presents the events, the deeds and doings, the negligence and

the performance, the omission and commission, of the past year. Mingled emotions necessarily rise up in our minds, as we approach any of these anniversary epochs that mark the progress of time and the flight of years; and now, as we look back upon this, which is so fast drawing towards its close, we find much, very much, for which to thank God, and much also for which to reproach ourselves. Another year of privilege and opportunity, another year of discipline and probation, is soon to close up its record to eternity. What one of us does not wish that some passages in that record could be blotted out? What one of us does not feel the truth of the prophet's declaration, "Then shalt thou think of thy ways and be ashamed." May the experience of the past so make us wise and faithful for the future, that the close of the next year may find us, if on earth, better and holier, and if called from earth, holy and happy in heaven.

December 30th, 1849.

SERMON II.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE. — Ps. cxii. 6.

In our religious services a few weeks ago, I alluded to the completion of the third half-century of our existence as a church and society. I gave a brief outline of the changes in opinion and usage which had occurred in the American churches during the seventy years previous, as illustrating the feelings and circumstances under which this church originated. I presented the important principles in regard to ecclesiastical organization and the administration of the Christian religion, which this society aimed to establish, as put forth in its Manifesto of November 19th, 1699, and briefly recited the incidents connected with the call of Mr. Benjamin Colman to become its pastor, and his entrance upon his duties in December of that year.

The fourth date in our records is "Wednesday, January 31, 1700," which day, it is stated,

"was separated by us for public imploring the presence of God with us, his pardon and blessing, and accordingly solemnized." This was an important event in the history of our church, and I make the near approach of its anniversary an occasion for again calling your attention to a portion of its history.

The Manifesto, put forth by the undertakers in November, 1699, seems to have been all that was at first adopted by the society in the shape of creed or covenant. At a private meeting held December 12th, at Mr. Mico's house, a church, or body of communicants, was organized, but, as appears from the records, those entering into it, fourteen in all, whose names are given, simply declared "their consent and agreement to walk together in all the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ." At this meeting, it was voted, "that Mr. Colman present the desires of the society to the ministers of the town to keep a day of prayer with us." This request was at first peremptorily refused by two of the ministers acting apparently in behalf of the rest. Their letter, preserved in the manuscript volume of Colman Papers, belonging to the Historical Society, bears date December 28th, 1699, and is as follows.

"MR. COLMAN :—

"Whereas you have signified to us that your

Society have desired us to join with them in a public fast, in order to your intended communion, our answer is, that as we have formerly once and again insinuated unto you, that if you would in due manner lay aside what you call your Manifesto, and resolve and declare that you will keep to the *Heads* of *Agreement* on which the United Brethren in London have made their union, and then publicly proceed with the presence, countenance, and concurrence of the New England churches, we should be free to give you our fellowship and our best assistance, which things you have altogether declined and neglected to do; thus we must now answer, that, if you will give us the satisfaction which the law of Christ requires for your disorderly proceedings, we shall be happy to gratify your desires; otherwise, we may not do it, lest our joining with you in such an action be interpreted as an approbation of those miscarriages, which both before and since the publication of the said Manifesto, it seems to us, you have fallen into, and lest we become partakers of the guilt of those irregularities by which you have given just cause of offence, both to us and to all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ throughout New England.

"INCREASE MATHER,
JAMES ALLEN."

This note is curious, as indicating the state of feeling and manners towards the new clergyman. The common courtesies of correspondence are all disregarded. Here is no address of "Sir," or "Dear Sir," or "Rev. Sir." They do not even recognize him as invested with the clerical office. The address is short and direct, "Mr. Colman," and it is signed, without any expressions of interest, sympathy, respect, or kind feeling, "Increase Mather, James Allen." This crusty letter, in the handwriting of Increase Mather, was doubtless written by him, and breathes his spirit. What answer Mr. Colman returned to it, or whether he returned any answer in writing, cannot now be ascertained. If there was any further correspondence upon the subject, it would be deeply interesting, as throwing light upon this early period of our history; yet, if it was all conducted in the spirit of the letter just given, it is not to be regretted that the correspondence cannot now be found. I was wrong, perhaps, in describing the letter as a peremptory refusal. It alludes to a previous peremptory refusal, unless the Manifesto was withdrawn, and the principles of union of the London churches adopted, but it does not now insist upon this. That demand is abated. "If you will give us the satisfaction which the law of Christ requires for your disorderly proceedings, we will gratify your desires."

What satisfaction was given, what explanations were made, cannot now be ascertained. These explanations, however, aided by the influence which Mr. Colman's eminent talents and strong character began to exert from the moment of his arrival in the country, were sufficient, and five weeks after the date of this extraordinary note, these very men, Increase Mather and James Allen, together with Wadsworth, Cotton Mather, and Samuel Willard, all the ministers of the three Congregational churches of the town, did unite with this church in keeping a day of public prayer.

Our own records are silent in regard to the particulars of this occasion. From the Diary of Chief Justice Sewall, we learn that it "was a close, dark day." At the opening of the service in the morning, Mr. Colman read a paper, or writing, that had been agreed upon and signed by all the ministers. It is a matter of regret that no copy of this paper is upon our records or files, or can now be found anywhere. We learn from the authority I have just quoted, Judge Sewall's Diary, that it was drawn up, out of two which had been rejected, by Rev. Wm. Brattle, at a meeting of the ministers held at Mr. Willard's, January 24th, at which himself and the Lieutenant-Governor were present. At this meeting, says the Diary, "Mr. Colman got his brethren to

subscribe it." It was read to the audience as explaining the basis or grounds on which the ministers united in the services of that day, and were to govern their future intercourse. The morning services were conducted chiefly by Mr. Colman; the afternoon services entirely by the other ministers. Dr. Increase Mather preached, and in his sermon took care to make a qualification or explanation of his text, and inculcate from it a doctrine which left him ample liberty to make any attack upon the new church which he might subsequently feel inclined to direct against it. His text was, "Follow peace with all men and holiness." The doctrine enforced was, we must follow peace so far as it consists with holiness.*

Although there was, thus early, this public recognition of our church, and this public expression of sympathy and fellowship on the part of the ministers, yet it was but a lull in the storm of opposition to the Manifesto Church, which continued to rage for some time. Several years passed before Mr. Colman was on terms of intimate communion and regular exchanges with the other ministers of Boston and the neighborhood, though it is impossible to ascertain any reliable facts by which to determine at what precise period the other ministers ceased to regard him as an

* New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. III. p. 121.

innovator, and to exchange with him as often as with each other. This is of little consequence now, and was at the time of little consequence. Mr. Colman's talents and fidelity, the character and standing of most of his congregation, and the just, enlarged, catholic principles upon which the church was established, soon rendered all opposition insignificant and powerless. The church flourished, increasing rapidly in numbers and in influence. Satisfactory evidence of this is afforded by the fact, that at the close of the first year of Mr. Colman's ministry considerable augmentation of his salary was voted, and before the close of the second year, in June, 1701, it was thought desirable to furnish him with a permanent assistant in his work; and the young society had the pecuniary ability which enabled it to do this, and the religious zeal which prompted to it. Such an assistant was found in the person of Mr. Eliphalet Adams, a graduate of Harvard College, of the class of 1694. Mr. Adams was not ordained as colleague pastor, but continued to serve the society in this capacity of assistant for two years and a half, called thereto by an annual election on the part of the congregation.

And here it is worthy of remark, that, so far as the records show, the only internal quarrel or contention of any kind that has occurred in this church, during its century and a half of existence,

not!
Henry Rice
1821

is connected with this Mr. Adams. What was the nature or point of this contention cannot now be determined, as Dr. Colman, in the records under date of August 2, 1703, simply says, — "At the end of the half-year, Mr. Adams left preaching statedly with us, and I willingly omit the mention of the divisions and angers among us upon his departure." Let us hope that another hundred and fifty years may pass without any further record of "divisions and angers." After the departure of Mr. Adams, who was settled in 1709 at New London, no church-meetings were held for several years, the records describing those which had just been held as very "uncomfortable." In October, 1711, the old meeting-house of the First Church, situated in State Street, was destroyed by fire. "Our church," writes Colman in the records, "invited the pastors of the First Church to preach with us in turns every Sabbath, and to join in the administration of ordinances. To which they, with their church, consented, and continued with us till May the 4th, 1713, when they took their leave of us with a very grateful letter, read publicly by me to our congregation, and went into their own house."

As an evidence that the members of this society, though denounced as radical innovators, retained still no small share of Puritan prejudice, it may be stated that Thomas Brattle, who died in 1713,

left by his will a legacy to the church, viz. as stated in the records, "A pair of organs, which he dedicated and devoted to the praise and glory of God with us, if we would accept thereof, and within the year after his decease, procure a sober person, skilful to play thereon. The church, with all possible respect to the memory of our devoted friend and benefactor, *voted*, that they did not think it proper to use the same in the public worship of God."

After the departure of Mr. Adams, in 1703, Mr. Colman had the sole charge of the large and flourishing parish for twelve years. They were years of peace and prosperity, of growth in things temporal and spiritual. At the expiration of this period, the "divisions and angers," whatever they were, occasioned by the departure of Mr. Adams, having died out and been forgotten, the society determined to have a colleague pastor. As the whole proceedings had on this occasion were in singular contrast with the manner in which similar affairs are conducted at the present day, it may be interesting to you to hear Dr. Colman's account of it from the records.

"July 4th, 1715," he writes, "was our first public meeting of the whole congregation, when the following votes passed: —

"1st. That they did apprehend and judge it to be for the glory of God and the good of

this church and congregation, that another person be chosen to the pastoral office among us. 2d. That in order thereunto, the first Tuesday in August be kept as a day of prayer, to implore the Divine direction and guidance in the said election. Accordingly, Tuesday, the 2d of August, was observed by us with prayer and fasting, the ministers of the town assisting at it. On August the 16th, the congregation met for the election of a second pastor, and after the opening of the meeting by prayer, as usual, and a discourse had agreeably to the occasion, the question was put, whether the brethren were ready to proceed and write their votes for the election of some other person into the pastoral office with me; and if they were, that they should signify it by lifting up their hands, whereupon all the hands were lifted up. The brethren then wrote their votes, and put them into the box on the table before me, which were counted and opened, and out of sixty-six votes there were sixty for Mr. William Cooper. It is to be noted, that no person was nominated, nor Mr. Cooper's name once mentioned, either now or in the former meetings, until the votes were counted, and I had declared his election by this great majority."

Mr. Cooper accepted this invitation, upon condition that he should be excused "from engaging presently in a constant course of preaching, it

being a very early day with him." It was determined, therefore, that he should preach but once a fortnight, and that his ordination should be postponed at least one year. He was ordained on the 23d day of May, 1716.

The spirit of innovation, or rather, I would say, a readiness to make such changes in ecclesiastical matters as a wise judgment would approve, still existed in our church, and at the ordination of Mr. Cooper, two changes were made in what was then the usual course of these services. The sermon was preached by Mr. Colman. Previously, it had been the usual, and I believe the universal custom, in New England, for the person who was to be ordained to preach himself. But, says Colman in the preface to his sermon, which was printed, "This practice has, of late years, been much complained of by our young ministers as a great impropriety imposed upon them. In which opinion I concur, and was, therefore, willing to relieve Mr. Cooper, and assign him a more proper part and service, which he also chose." This more proper part and service, which Mr. Cooper performed, was to read a paper, in which he gave a general view of the Christian doctrines and the pastoral office. This was read after the sermon and before the consecrating prayer. These two customs, introduced here, I believe, for the first time, became afterwards

common at a New England Congregational ordination. One of them is retained at the present day, and the other has been of late years discontinued. It would not be unwise to revive it.*

* This custom probably never became absolutely universal. I had supposed, that it was only within the present century, some thirty or forty years ago, that this custom, and also that of the examination of the candidate by the ordaining council, had been much disregarded or discontinued. The contrary would seem to be the fact. Evidence can be found that this examination was often opposed in ordaining councils, and sometimes neglected by them. In a sermon entitled, "The Importance and Necessity of Christians considering Jesus Christ in the Extent of his high and glorious Character; a Sermon preached at the South Church in Boston. By Samuel Hopkins, A. M., Minister of the Gospel in Great Barrington. Boston, N. E. Printed and sold by Kneeland and Adams, next to the Treasurer's Office, in Milk Street. 1768," I find a note, from which the following extracts are made: —

"I desire it may be considered, whether the ordaining councils who neglect to examine candidates for the ministry, with respect to their religious sentiments, and they who zealously oppose such examinations, do not, by this conduct, openly declare, that it is with them no matter of importance what men believe, what their sentiments are, and what doctrines they hold with respect to Jesus Christ; or what thoughts they have of his character and religion. . . . . The conduct of these gentlemen is really surprising, and none need be at a loss what will be the fate of Christianity, so far as their influence reaches. All the distinguishing, important doctrines of it will be neglected; and instead of preaching the Gospel, sermons will be either insipid dissertations upon something else, or filled with stupid inconsistencies; else be only flond [florid?] harangues, without any meaning. Unless, perhaps, when times and circumstances will bear it,

The settlement of a new minister or a colleague minister commonly gives an impulse to the religious affairs of a parish, and within a few years after Mr. Cooper's ordination, although at what precise time the records do not show, it was found necessary to enlarge the church, which was done by an addition to the building in the rear of the pulpit, with pews on the floor and a gallery. On Friday, the 4th of March, 1720, was begun and established, Dr. Colman preaching the first sermon, the monthly Ante-Communion or Preparatory Lecture. In this lecture the First Church and the Brattle Street Church were associated, the ministers preaching it alternately, on Friday afternoon. The lecture was continued in this form for nearly a century. Then other churches united in it, and when the present pastor of this church entered upon his duties, the ministers of the Fed-

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another system of doctrines will be preached up, which at present are somewhat unpopular; therefore cannot be with safety expressly and openly espoused. For the sake of which, that they may be *privily* introduced, and from a desire and design to extirpate the more commonly received, popular doctrines, many think they have good reason to conclude this method with respect to candidates is gone into." When it is considered that this was written in 1768, one is reminded of Solomon's declaration, "There is nothing new under the sun." The modern charge of *concealment*, "*privily*," is an old affair, and the neglect of councils to examine candidates had its advocates and abetters a century ago in the Congregational churches of New England.

eral Street, the New South, and the Purchase Street Churches were united with those of the First and the Brattle Street Churches in preaching a monthly Ante-Communion Lecture at Federal Street, on Thursday evening. It was, however, I am sorry to say, but thinly attended; the united representation from the five congregations associated in the service seldom making an audience so large as to be very inspiring to the preacher. During the summer of 1837, the lecture was discontinued, with the intention of renewing it in the autumn. But it was never resumed, the ministers thinking that in some other way, by other modes and forms of instruction, each could more effectually benefit his own people. No notice of this discontinuance, at least none that I ever heard of, was taken, and no objection made to it, by any of the churches associated in it. I have long regretted that this lecture was discontinued; and were it not that all the signs and tendencies of the times are against it, I should still hope to see the First Church and Brattle Street, for so many years sister churches, again united in some common service of the kind.

Dr. Colman and Mr. Cooper were associate pastors of the church for more than twenty-seven years. They worked together with extraordinary efficiency, and, considering the religious agitation of a portion of this period, and the strong con-

trasts in their characters, with extraordinary harmony; indeed, so far as the records show, with entire and perfect harmony. To those who are at all acquainted with the ecclesiastical annals of New England, it is well known that the year 1740 is called the year of the Great Awakening, occasioned by the advent or mission of the celebrated Whitefield to this country. As it is a well-established fact that Colman and Cooper ultimately differed somewhat in their estimate of this person, and of the line of conduct they were disposed to pursue in relation to him, and the excitement of the times, I expected to find in the records some evidences of this, — at least, some notices of Whitefield that would help to throw light upon the matter of his preaching in this pulpit, and the opposition of interests and feelings, if any were occasioned or excited thereby. But the records are silent upon the whole subject. I have made researches in various directions for satisfactory information upon this matter, but without success. It is generally understood that Whitefield preached his first sermon in the pulpit of Brattle Street Church. The only authority for this is the assertion to that effect of an anonymous writer of that day. Whitefield himself, in one of his letters, in describing his first visit to Boston, says, "On the first Lord's day I heard Dr. Colman, in the forenoon, notwithstanding he asked me to

preach after he was up in the pulpit and had finished the first prayer." In the afternoon, he certainly preached for Mr. Foxcroft, of the First Church. If his first sermon was preached in our pulpit, then it must have been preached at a lecture. But whether Whitefield's first sermon was preached here or not, he certainly preached in our pulpit, and Mr. Cooper entered largely into the excitement he awakened, and the congregation was largely affected by it also. In 1741, eighty-five persons were added to the church; and in the following year, forty-two were added. From all that can be ascertained upon the subject, it is evident that, in relation to the Great Awakening, as it is called, Dr. Colman and his colleague, Mr. Cooper, entertained widely different views,* and that this difference of opinion

* The following passage in one of Dr. Palfrey's notes places this point beyond dispute.

"Dr. Colman wrote, in a letter to Mr. Williams of Lebanon, 'It is at this day enough to make the heart of a sober and considerate Christian bleed within him to hear of the sore rents and divisions made by Mr. Davenport and others in a great number of towns and churches throughout our provinces. Almost all on Long Island are thus broken to pieces, and so are many in Connecticut, and with us of the Massachusetts to a sorrowful degree.' And in his sermon at the ordination of S. Cooper, he expresses his 'wish before God, and in his fear, that those among ourselves who have of late years taken upon themselves to go about exhorting and preaching, grossly unfurnished with ministerial gifts and

extended to the congregation also; and it is to the credit of all the parties concerned, that no schism took place, — that the harmony of the parish and of the pastors was unbroken.

After a brief illness, Mr. Cooper died of apoplexy, December 14th, 1743. The day previous had been spent by the congregation in fasting and prayer for his recovery, a public service being held in the church morning and afternoon, the min-

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knowledge, would suffer those words of the Lord [Jeremiah xxiii. 31, 32] to sink deep into their hearts, to check them in their bold career, and blind censures of many faithful pastors, into whose folds they are daily breaking, and because of the mildness of our spirits towards them, seem to grow the more bold and fierce. And it were greatly to be wished that people would beware of such straggling, illiterate teachers, and avoid them, in whatever appearance of sheep's clothing they may come.' Cooper's feeling on the subject appears from the following extract of a preface written by him for a sermon by Jonathan Edwards, about a year after the revival began. 'If any are resolutely set to disbelieve this work, to reproach and oppose it, they must be left to the free, sovereign power and mercy of God to enlighten and rescue them. These, if they have had opportunity to be rightly informed, I am ready to think, would have been disbelievers and opposers of the miracles and mission of our Saviour, had they lived in his days. The malignity which some of them have discovered to me approaches near to the unpardonable sin; and they had need beware lest they sin the sin which is unto death.'" "That Dr. Colman at first entertained a most favorable opinion of Whitefield is evident from his inviting him to preach, and from lavish praise bestowed upon him in a sermon which Colman delivered at a Tuesday Evening Lecture, October 21, 1740." — Palfrey's *Sermon*, pp. 49, 54.

isters of the town assisting therein. He expired at six o'clock in the morning. "The congregation," writes Dr. Colman in the records, "met that afternoon, and voted to bury him by a subscription, which presently rose to nine hundred pounds. They put his whole family and me into mourning, and gave rings to all the ministers of the association. On Thursday the funeral was attended, with great solemnity. The church and congregation walked before the hearse, two and two, and never was there a greater mourning through the town and county. The ministers that bore the pall and the deacons of the church had mourning gloves and hatbands, which was new to us, but very decent. The salary was voted to be continued to the family till further order." This extract from the records shows that Mr. Cooper had the respect, the confidence, and the strong attachment of his people.

He does not hold that prominent place among the worthies of our church, or in the annals of the New England clergy, which his talents and services might claim for him. This is attributable, I think, to the fact that he was a junior pastor, dying before he came into the sole charge of the pulpit, and also to the circumstance that his pulpit was so soon filled by another person of the same name, his own son, whose more popular talents and showy qualities and longer ministry tended to

obscure the father's fame. Mr. Cooper was, in reality, a man of uncommon talents, of large and accurate learning, and possessing some sterling qualities of character. He was chosen President of Harvard College, and his election would have been unanimously confirmed by the Board of Overseers, but that, just before the vote was to be taken, a letter from him was read, in which he "wholly excused himself from that honor and trust," being unwilling to be separated from the people of his charge. To this charge he devoted himself with entire fidelity and unabating zeal.

Unlike Dr. Colman, he concerned himself little with those interests of the community that lie outside the immediate duties and walk of the clerical profession, and to this is it owing, perhaps, that his name is now so much less known among us. He was a strenuous advocate, however, for Congregational liberty and independence. One of the most important incidents of his life, and one that served admirably for the display of the sterling qualities of his character, was his connection with the troubles that occurred in the church at Springfield, at the ordination of the Rev. Robert Breck, in 1736. These troubles originated in the supposed heresy of Mr. Breck, who was not thought to be quite sound upon the doctrines of Atonement, Election,

and some other points. He was charged with holding the opinion, that God could forgive sin upon simple repentance, without any satisfaction being made to his justice ; and with maintaining, that, if the decrees of God in regard to election were absolute and unchangeable, so that naught men could perform or neglect could alter their condition, all encouragement to duty and moral effort was removed. He was accused, also, of regarding the important passage, 1 John v. 7, as no part of holy writ, and with receiving the Apostles' declaration, "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him," in an unqualified sense, and believing that the heathen who acted up to their light would not be damned hereafter for want of faith in Christ. But though obnoxious to several ministers of the Hampshire Association, in consequence of his supposed opinions upon the above points, he was regularly invited to become the pastor of the church in Springfield, and the council called to ordain him met there on the 7th of October, 1735. Mr. Cooper was moderator of this council, which was composed of two other Boston ministers, Messrs. Welsteed and Samuel Mather, Mr. Cooke of Sudbury, and three clergymen of the Hampshire Association. The council entered upon the examination of the charges against Mr. Breck ; but its proceedings were

interrupted. Mr. Breck was arrested and carried into Connecticut. An attempt was made even to arrest those members of the council who were not citizens of the county of Hampshire. A warrant for this purpose was issued, but not served. The council, after coming to a result in which they advised the church in Springfield to abide by their invitation to Mr. Breck, and continue their favorable regards towards him, adjourned for a few days, to meet in Boston. The parish brought the matter before the General Court, where it was decided, after a full and patient hearing, that the proceedings of the majority of the parish in reference to the call of Mr. Breck were regular, and within their legitimate rights; that the council was regularly constituted, and the matter must be allowed to proceed. After this decision, the council met again in January, and Mr. Breck was ordained on the 26th of that month, 1736, Mr. Cooper preaching the sermon.

The real question at issue in this difficulty was, whether the church at Springfield should be allowed to choose its own minister, itself judging of his soundness or heresy, or whether it should be controlled in that choice by the Hampshire Association and other foreign influences. In the proceedings of the council, as its moderator, and in the pamphlet controversy that ensued, Mr.

Cooper took an active and prominent part, and always in behalf of Congregational liberty and independence. A pamphlet of a hundred pages, examining and answering a document put forth by the Hampshire ministers, is presumed to have been written by him. This pamphlet was anonymous, but it was attributed to him at the time, and there can be little doubt that it was the production of his pen. Of this, Dr. Palfrey very justly observes: "He did few things more honorable to him. It well expounds the true doctrine concerning the rights of churches, the constitution of councils, and the impropriety of interference on the part of associations." Aside from the sphere of his immediate duties as the pastor of this church, this was the most important public event in which Mr. Cooper took a prominent part, and his conduct on this occasion illustrates the practical wisdom and the firmness and independence of his character.

From such examination as I have been able to give to his writings, and from all that I can gather of his history, he seems to me to have been a man to be profoundly respected and revered, rather than strongly and tenderly beloved; — a man of independence, firmness, courage, zeal, sincerity, but not a man in whom any winning graces of manner or of disposition abounded; — in short, a man in whom the rigid Calvinism of that day, in

its austerity, its repulsiveness, and its strength, was fitly represented.*

After his death, Dr. Colman, with occasional help from President Holyoke and Professor Appleton from Cambridge, took the sole charge of the pulpit, thanking God, as he says in the records, "that I have found strength renewed for the double work and care which this bereavement hath called me to." Already sinking beneath the burden of threescore years and ten, his great desire now was to see the flock which he had gathered, and to which for so many years he had ministered, provided with a faithful shepherd before his death. In this desire he was not disappointed. After hearing several candidates, the society, in

* Among the writings of Mr. Cooper that are extant, the most important and elaborate that I have met with is a little volume, published by "J. Edwards and H. Foster, Cornhil, 1740," entitled, "The Doctrine of Predestination unto Life, Explained and Vindicated: In *Four* Sermons, preached to the Church of Christ in *Brattle Street*, and published at their general Desire: With some additional *Passages* and *Quotations*." This volume is preceded by a Preface, signed by Benjamin Colman, Joseph Sewall, Thomas Prince, Andrew Le Mercier, John Webb, in which they say, "We willingly take this opportunity to testify our concurrence with the *Author* in the verity and importance of this *Doctrine*, and our satisfaction in his having preached and published these Discourses." I have by me a copy of the first edition of this work. It was published in London about twenty-five years after its publication here, and was reprinted in Boston in 1804.

December, 1745, made choice of Mr. Samuel Cooper, the son of their late junior pastor, and he was ordained May 22d, 1746. Fifteen months afterwards, August 29th, 1747, Dr. Colman closed a long and useful life, and with a few remarks upon his character and ministry I shall close this discourse.

Among the distinguished men of the clergy of Massachusetts, there have been few, if any, whose talents, character, and usefulness make them more worthy our thorough esteem and grateful remembrance than Benjamin Colman. Like his two associates in office, he was a native of this town, his father having come from London and settled in Boston about two years before his birth, which occurred on the 19th of October, 1673. He was, therefore, twenty-six years of age when called to the pastoral office in this church. He was prepared for college by that celebrated grammar-master, Ezekiel Cheever, and took his Bachelor's degree in 1692. "Being devoted to the work of the evangelical ministry by his parents, and inclining to it from his childhood," he immediately commenced the study of theology, and began to preach occasionally about a year after leaving college. There being a vacancy in the pulpit at Medford, he preached there for some months, but declined an invitation to settle in that town. His health at this time was

delicate. When he pronounced the Master's oration on taking his second degree, "his thin and slender appearance, his soft and delicate voice, and the red spots on his cheeks, caused the audience to conclude him bordering on consumption, and to be designed but for a few weeks of life." But Providence had an important work for him to do on earth. Within three weeks after his Master's oration, he sailed for England, to make improvement by what he could see and learn there. The vessel in which he sailed was taken by a French privateer, and he was carried into Nantes. After various fortunes he was set at liberty, and made his way to London. He was four years in England, where he preached with great acceptance in various places, and made the acquaintance and secured the friendship of some of the most distinguished of the Dissenting clergy of that day, and also of several divines of the Established Church, particularly of Dr. Hough, Bishop of Oxford, celebrated for his opposition to the arbitrary measures of James the Second, for the wisdom and humility which led him to decline the primacy of England, and for the green old age which he enjoyed to his ninety-third year. This visit of four years to England was of essential service to Colman, in enlarging his knowledge of men and things, and confirming his liberal views and principles. But for the invitation which he

received from this church, he would probably have settled in the ministry in England, and passed the greater portion, if not the whole, of his life there. Under the circumstances, the selection of Colman to be the first minister of this church was the most fortunate that could have been made. At least among his contemporaries we find none better fitted for the difficult post. Firm without obstinacy, conciliatory without compromise, dignified without pride or pretension, a polished gentleman in his manners, a patient student and thorough scholar in his learning, enlarged, penetrating, comprehensive in his views and principles as a man, sincere, benevolent, devout in his faith and feelings as a Christian and a pastor, he was admirably fitted to take charge of the new church, and carry out with mingled wisdom, firmness, and gentleness the customs and principles which it had adopted, and to him do we greatly owe it, that the most important of these customs and principles received at last the approval and adoption of most of the New England Congregational churches. But though ever faithful as the pastor of this church, his influence and his labors were by no means confined to it. Though gifted with every quality to attract admiration and applause, he seems to have had little love of mere popular notoriety. His great ambition was to be useful; he therefore gave himself to many labors

that are eminently serviceable to the community, but bring in little fame. His services to the College, direct and indirect, are sufficient to make him rank among its first benefactors. By his large correspondence abroad, he attracted to it the attention of eminent persons in England, and procured for it important donations in books and money. He was for many years an active member of the Corporation, and would have accepted the presidency, to which he was chosen and confirmed by the Board of Overseers, but the House of Representatives, with whom the matter then rested, would make no provision for his support.*

* "Upon the death of President Leverett, in 1724, and the refusal of Rev. Joseph Sewall to accept the vacant chair, Colman was chosen by the Corporation, on the 18th of November, to succeed his former tutor and constant friend as head of the institution whose interests it had been the study and delight of both to promote; a sufficient evidence, if we had no other, of the confidence reposed in his abilities by the friends of the College. His election was approved by the Overseers on the 24th of the same month, and a committee of that body was appointed to inform Mr. Colman of their approbation of his election, and to desire his acceptance, and to apply to his church for his discharge from the pastoral office; and also to 'wait on the Honorable Genl Court to inform them of the Choice that is made of a President and to move for a proper Salary for his Incouragement.' But, unfortunately, Colman was peculiarly obnoxious to a majority of the House of Representatives, where sectarian prejudices and political animosities now raged hand in hand; and consequently, when the memorial of the committee of the Overseers was laid before them, praying that they would 'appoint

Of many measures for the benefit of the town of Boston he was the originator, and in every enter-

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a larger salary than has been usually allowed, for the honorable maintenance of the President,' it was voted that, 'forasmuch as at present it is uncertain whether the Church, of which the Rev. Mr. Colman is Pastor, can be persuaded to part from him, or whether Mr. Colman is inclinable to leave his Church and undertake the office of President of Harvard College, and this being a matter of great weight and importance, especially to the establishment of the Churches in the Province, as well as to the said College, the further consideration of this memorial be therefore referred until the said Mr. Colman's mind, as well as [that] of the Church of which he is pastor, be communicated to this Court, and made certain, whether he and they are willing he should accept of the choice and undertake the office of a President of Harvard College, to which he is chosen as aforesaid.' This vote, although not concurred in by the Council, indicated with sufficient clearness the disposition of the popular branch of the General Court towards Mr. Colman, and convinced him that it was useless to expect from them a permanent provision for his support, should he accept the Presidency; and the melancholy experience of his predecessors in that office was a warning to him of what he himself might expect, should he trust his fortunes to the tender mercies of the Provincial government. He was also well acquainted with the feelings of the General Court towards him, as is evident from a letter on this subject to White Kennett, Bishop of Peterborough, in which he says, 'I am not well in the opinion of our House of Representatives of late years, on whom the President depends for his subsistence, and they could not have pinched me without the Chair's suffering with me, which I could by no means consent it should do for my sake.' Determined, therefore, to bring the question of his support to a speedy decision, and having privately seen a copy of the vote passed

prise that concerned the improvement of the community he took a prominent part. In short, his life forms a chapter in the history of New England. His influence was felt in every quarter, his advice was sought upon all occasions, and in

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on the 3d instant by the House of Representatives, and been informed of its nonconcurrence by the Council, Mr. Colman addressed a letter, on the 10th of December, to Hon. Samuel Sewall, chairman of the committee of the Overseers, in which, after stating that, although he had always served the College to the extent of his abilities, he not only had never sought the office of President, but had rather shunned it, and expressing his disinclination to leave his church, he declares that, 'as I wish the President in all times to come may especially give himself unto sacred studies and exercises, so I would humbly supplicate the General Court for any one who shall do so, to grant him a very sufficient and honorable support; but for the honorable Court to insist on their vote of knowing my mind, whether I am willing to accept of the choice, and to undertake the office of President, to which I am chosen, and also of knowing my Church's mind, whether they can part from me, before they will fix any salary for me in the said office, must determine me to give my answer in the negative to the Honorable and Reverend the Overseers of Harvard College, which in that case I now do.' This letter being read at a meeting of the Overseers, on the 17th of December, the committee was directed to 'wait again on the honorable General Court, with Mr. Colman's answer and with this vote, praying that the matter of a salary may be considered by them, and so acted upon as may be most for the speedy settlement of a President in the said College, and therein for the good of the whole Province.' The proceedings of the Representatives, upon the reception of this application, were as follows, as stated in the Records of the Overseers (Book I. pp 72-74):—

matters civil and ecclesiastical his opinions had weight. Perhaps the best summary of Dr. Colman's character that has been given is that of Dr. Barnard, who describes him "as a most gentlemanly man, of polite aspect and conversa-

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"'The Overseers met according to adjournment aforesaid Dec. 18, 1724, In the Council-Chamber in Boston.

"'The aforesaid Committee of the Overseers made report that they had waited on the General Court with Mr. Colman's answer and the Votes of the last meeting, which were read and debated in the House, the return thereto being as follows, viz.:

"'In the House of Representatives Dec. 18, 1724.

"'The question was put,

"'Whether the Court would establish a salary or allowance for the President of Harvard College for the time being before the person chosen to that office had accepted the duty and trust thereof.

"'It passed in the NEGATIVE, *nemine contradicente.*

"'WM. DUDLEY, Speaker.

"'Sent up for concurrence.

"'In Council, Dec. 18th, 1724.

"'Read and NONCONCURRED.

"'J. WILLARD, Secretary.'

"Notwithstanding the nonconcurrence of the Council, the symptoms of hostility were too strong to be mistaken, and Colman's independence of spirit would not allow him to be dependent for support upon the uncertain favors of party administration. Accordingly, upon the 26th of this month, in answer to another application from the Overseers, he transmitted his final answer to the committee of that board, in the negative, declaring that he 'does not see his way clear to accept of the choice made of him to be the President of the College.'" — *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, Vol. III. pp. 223-225.

tion, very extensive erudition, great devotion of spirit and behavior, a charming and admired preacher, extensively serviceable to the College and the country, whose works breathe his exalted, oratorical, devout, and benign spirit, an excellent man in spirit, in faith, in holiness, and charity."

With all his excellences and valuable public services, Colman was not popular, that is, he was not a general favorite with the community. It is a singular circumstance, that, with the exception of the sermon preached by his young colleague, no notice was taken of his death in the pulpits of this town or neighborhood. But in him the text is fulfilled. Though some of his contemporaries failed to do him justice, his name is now held in honored remembrance; and to us of this church and congregation, this brief review of his ministry, his life and character, should be an incentive to fidelity in all duty.

January 27th, 1850.

SERMON III.

THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL BE IN EVERLASTING REMEMBRANCE. — Psalm cxii. 6.

THE Lord's Supper was publicly administered to the church in Brattle Square for the first time on the 14th of February, 1700. I make the proximity of the anniversary of this event an occasion for continuing our review of its history.

My last sermon closed with the ministry of Dr. Colman, and some brief remarks on his character and services. We enter this morning upon the ministry of one of the most celebrated and distinguished men of his day, Dr. Samuel Cooper, the third pastor of the church, whose name will always be had in remembrance. His ministry covered a very interesting period in the history both of this church and of the country; and although on the whole it was eminently brilliant and useful, it was marked by some events, in relation to which the decisions of the parish seem not to have been guided by a practical and

prospective wisdom, and to have entailed consequences which have a somewhat unfavorable influence upon our present position and prospects.

It was a fortunate circumstance, that before Dr. Colman's death the parish was already provided with a young minister, who, from the moment of his assuming the charge of the pulpit, gained constantly a stronger hold upon their confidence, affection, and respect. Mr. Samuel Cooper was settled as colleague pastor about fifteen months before Dr. Colman's decease. Judging from the records, I should think that, notwithstanding his eminent gifts and qualifications, it was owing, in large part, to the influence of Dr. Colman, and the great weight which his opinion and wishes had with his people up to the hour of his death, that the choice of the society fell upon Mr. Cooper.

At a parish meeting held September 4th, 1744, about nine months after the death of William Cooper, it was *voted* "to come into a nomination of three persons to preach each his month with us, reserving to our pastor the liberty of asking Mr. Samuel Cooper to preach also, if he find him inclined to begin his evangelical services." The three persons nominated at this meeting were Messrs. John Whaley, William Vinal, and Samuel Langdon. They preached each his month; they were followed by Mr.

Cooper, who preached the same length of time, "all of them," say the records, "to the great acceptance and esteem, both of the pastor and the congregation." At the end of these four months a parish meeting was held, on December 31st; "a very full meeting," says Colman, in the records, "of no less than one hundred and thirty-eight in number, when, having opened the meeting with a prayer suited to the occasion, I spoke to them in the following words." As the address is characteristic of the times and the man, I give it entire.

"Honored and Beloved, — You will remember that at your last meeting, the fourth day of September past, you nominated and chose four persons to preach each his month with us, who have accordingly done so, every one of them appearing now to you, I suppose, by the grace and gift of God in them, very like to prove great blessings in their generation. At the meeting aforesaid, you were pleased to vote your assembling again on this day, and I thank God for the opportunity of seeing you together, with a happy prospect of unity and concert in the great and important point that we are met upon. The year of our mourning under the holy, bereaving hand of God upon us is now finished. We have from one Lord's day to another, as well as on our set and solemn days of humiliation and pray-

er, been supplicating the great Head of the Church to repair the breach in his own time and way, and give us another pastor after his own heart, gifted and spirited like the dear deceased; and I hope the gracious Saviour has such an one in store for you and your children, your families and households. Through the patience of God I continue with you to this day, under the growing infirmities of age. Nevertheless, having obtained help of God, I have not failed, in one administration or other, to minister every Lord's day, and, I thank God, to your kind acceptance. And if I may now live to see you united in your choice of another pastor, as I once saw your worthy predecessors and not a few of yourselves here present, I should rejoice and give thanks with you all. Yea, might this be the day, it will be a gladsome one to me. I will now repeat the names of the young gentlemen who have been preaching to you at your request, — Messrs. Whaley, Vinal, Langdon, and Cooper. Show, Lord, which thou hast chosen, and lead us in thy truth, and teach us, Father of righteousness, for thy name's sake, in the determinations of this morning. Amen."

After this address, the question being put, whether they should now proceed to ballot for the election of one into the pastoral office, "every hand was lift up with appearing great alacrity

and gravity." The ballot resulted in the election of Samuel Cooper, who accepted the invitation. The same conditions were granted to him as had been previously granted to his father, namely, that his ordination should be postponed for a year, during which time he should be expected to preach but once a fortnight. His ordination was in fact postponed nearly a year and a half, and then took place apparently amid some diversity of opinion, though upon what points the diversity arose cannot now be ascertained.

Under date of the 25th of March, 1745, Dr. Colman records, "The congregation met, and the meeting being opened with prayer by the pastor, after more than an hour's debate, it was *voted*, That the ordination of Mr. Samuel Cooper be in the month of May ensuing, by the will of God, and on Wednesday, the 21st of said month, the reverend pastor desiring Mr. Cooper, in the name of this meeting, on the second or third Lord's day from this date, to give a confession of his faith in the public assembly." Probably it was the latter clause of this vote that gave occasion for the debate. The Great Awakening of 1740 had largely subsided, and a natural reaction in religious opinion and feeling had begun. It was feared, perhaps, by many of the friends of his father still remaining in the parish, that young Cooper's creed was not so strict and

sharply defined as it ought to be. To ascertain this fact, and if possible bring him up to the orthodox standard and confirm him in it, was probably the object of those who insisted upon a confession of faith, while the more liberal part of the parish were satisfied from the general tone and character of his preaching, which they had now heard for more than a year, and did not wish for a more full exposition of his opinions; or perhaps they regarded the demand for it to be an imposition upon his liberty. The demand was made, however, and answered. "On Lord's day, April 6th," writes Dr. Colman in the records, "Mr. Cooper gave in a sermon a confession of his faith to the general satisfaction of the audience," and on the 21st of the following month of May he was ordained by a council composed of the churches of Boston, Charlestown, and Cambridge.

In relation to this ordination I find on our records a vote which, on account of its bearing upo the principles of Congregationalism and the light it throws upon the ecclesiastical usages of our fathers, is of sufficient importance, perhaps, to be noticed. At the present day, in our portion of the Congregational body, an ecclesiastical council being called to ordain a minister, when the proper stage in the proceedings is reached, some one nominates a particular individual (commonly

one whom it is previously understood is prepared for the service), and moves that he be appointed and authorized to present the fellowship of the churches on the occasion. It is then moved that the assignment which has been made of the other parts of the ordination service be approved by the council; that is, it is understood that the council have no voice, authority, or right to determine who shall perform any of the different ordaining services, other than that which relates exclusively to themselves, namely, the expression of their fellowship. On the other hand, it is contended by some that a council, being called for ordination, has the whole matter in its hands, and may make any arrangement or assignment of parts that it chooses; that it is not a matter of right on the part of the church or the candidate to appoint them beforehand; that this is done for convenience only, and for convenience the appointment is approved by the council, though it would always be at its discretion and within its power to make any change. In relation to Mr. Cooper's ordination I find that our *church voted*, "That in case the reverend pastor, Dr. Colman, should find himself disabled by the infirmities of age or bodily weakness to preside in the proposed ordination, pray, and give the charge with the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery, then he be desired to request the Rev. Dr. Sewall, in the name of the

church, to preside and lead in that part of the solemnity." This service Dr. Sewall subsequently performed. This shows, at least, what our church at that time thought of its rights, and to what a limited extent it considered a discretionary power attached to the council.

Samuel Cooper entered upon his ministry as pastor of Brattle Street Church under as favorable circumstances as could well fall to the lot of any one. He was the son of a former minister, not long deceased, of whom the most grateful and honored recollections were cherished in the hearts of many, who stood ready to transfer to the son all the affection and reverence they had felt for the father. He was greatly beloved by the senior pastor, and was his especial favorite and choice among the candidates from among whom an election was to be made. Dr. Colman pretty distinctly intimated this by saying in a sermon, preached near the time the election was to be made, "God forbid that I should cease to pray for you, that another Cooper (I mean one like the deceased) be set over you in the Lord, a man of learning, parts, and powers, such as this place so much wants and calls for." For a year and a half he had the benefit of Dr. Colman's advice, council, and encouragement, in making him fully acquainted with the parish and his duties; and in addition to substantial learning and parts, he

possessed a rare combination of popular gifts and qualities, which secured him an eminently successful and useful ministry.

We are compelled, however, to resort to other sources than the records of the church during his pastorship to learn any thing of the condition and progress of our affairs. Twenty lines on one half-page of the records, and about as many more on a loose sheet of paper, comprise all that stands recorded in his own hand of his ministry of thirty-nine years' duration. The loose sheet is simply an account of three or four meetings of the congregation, which resulted in the adoption of a new edition of Tate and Brady, with an appendix composed chiefly of selections from Watts, as the hymn-book to be used in public worship, and all the information given us on the half-page in the records is, that the society worshipped for the first time in the new church on the 24th of July, 1773, and that the resignation of Deacon Storer was accepted August 1st of that year, "with the full approbation on the part of the church of his conduct in his office." In the handwriting of Dr. Thacher, who to his other eminent graces added that of method and order, there is a list of the baptisms administered, the marriages solemnized, and the admissions to the church made during Dr. Cooper's ministry. This list purports to have been copied from

the late pastor's interleaved almanacs. It is some apology for Dr. Cooper's neglect of the records, that the above period of his ministry was a time of political trouble, agitation, and excitement; that he was a zealous patriot of his day, and took a lively interest in public affairs. It is a further apology, also, and the real excuse, I imagine, with which he quieted his own conscience, that not many years after his settlement, in consequence of a law authorizing the collection of funds for the support of public worship by a tax upon pews, the meetings and doings of the proprietors began to be recorded in a separate volume. From these records, the earlier volumes of which, through the kindness of the clerk of the proprietors, I have been permitted to examine, we can gather every thing of interest affecting the temporal affairs and success or prosperity of the parish, and from this can infer something as to its spiritual state.

Of the events affecting the interests of the parish which occurred during Dr. Cooper's ministry, one of the most important, undoubtedly, was the erection of this house of worship, which in itself is a monument honorable to the piety of those who built it, an evidence of their zeal for religion, and of their readiness to contribute of their substance for its support. The old church, originally erected by the undertakers in 1699,

was built of wood. It had a tower and bell on the west end, and a door on the south side, opposite to which was the pulpit. The pews were square, and the house was constructed with two galleries, so that, though a smaller building, its general plan resembled that of the "Old South" of the present day. Its window-frames were of iron. It had never been painted inside or outside. It had been considerably enlarged during the ministry of Mr. William Cooper, and as late as 1766, additional pews were constructed to meet the wants of the society. It had now been built over seventy years, and withal had nothing very pleasing in its external appearance or internal accommodations, and nothing very striking connected with it, unless it were a memorable hour-glass for the pulpit, which is said to have been a foot high, inclosed in a gilded or brass frame. The records say that, at the sale of the old house, this hour-glass "was reserved for the use of the society," but what became of it cannot be ascertained.

The first distinct movement towards the erection of a new church appears from the records to have been made in 1772, by John Hancock, through a letter to the standing committee, in which he offered to contribute largely towards the object, if the congregation would determine to build. This letter was dated February 6th. On

the 12th of that month the parish held a meeting, and voted unanimously to build a new church, and appointed the requisite committee to decide upon plans, procure subscriptions, make contracts, &c. The important question, then, and the only one whose decision affects us at all at the present day, related to the location. Should the new church be erected in Brattle Close, upon the site of the old one? At that time the society did not own on this spot land sufficient for a church of the dimensions required and contemplated. If erected here, more land must be purchased to enlarge the lot. While the committee were making investigations upon this point, they received the following noble letter from Mr. James Bowdoin: —

"*To the Gentlemen of the Committee of the Society under the Pastoral Care of the Rev. Dr. Cooper:* —

"GENTLEMEN, — As many persons of our society, as well as others, appear desirous that the new meeting-house should be erected on the estate belonging to me fronting Tremont Street, and it being desirable that the peace and harmony at present subsisting in the society should not be interrupted or hazarded, I beg leave to make the following proposal; that for a pew in the new house, and in lieu of my subscription, I would

give the materials of the building now on the said estate, the bricks and stones of which, I imagine, would be worth, for the new house, two hundred pounds sterling; and with respect to the land, which nothing less than five hundred pounds sterling would purchase, I would make a present of it to the society for building the new house upon.

"This proposal, however, as I wish all our proceedings might be with the utmost unanimity, is on condition that the subscribers and the society generally agree to and fully acquiesce with it. Sincerely wishing the happiness of the society, I am, with great regard, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

"JAMES BOWDOIN.

"*Boston*, *March* 3*d*, 1772."

This proposal, with a plan of the land, &c., was immediately laid before the society, "and after considerable debate and a division thereon, it appeared that there was a considerable majority for building on the old spot in Brattle Street." So Mr. Bowdoin's proposal and generous gift were rejected, the society ordering, that his "letter be entered upon the church records, whereby the memory of it may be transmitted to posterity in honor of so liberal a benefactor," — and, we may now add, in evidence of the misjudgment

of those who rejected its proposal. In our history of one hundred and fifty years, no vote has been passed so unfortunate, no decision made so unwise, as this. The site offered for the new church was one of the most eligible that could have been selected in the whole town, the estate in question forming the corner of Tremont and Howard Streets, fronting for a considerable distance upon both of them. A church built there would have been on high ground, with an open space all around it. It would have been upon one of the public streets, yet somewhat back from it, and easily and pleasantly accessible from all quarters. It might have been so placed as to exhibit a front view for some distance down Hanover Street, and architecturally have been a conspicuous ornament to the city. The value of the land on which the old church stood, and the cost of what was needed to enlarge the lot, may be fairly estimated at one third or one half the sum of Mr. Bowdoin's estimation of his offer ; so that, in rejecting that offer, the society rejected a most eligible site for their church, and, at the same time, a diminution of about five thousand dollars in the cost of its construction. The decision, therefore, under the circumstances, seems most singular and unaccountable. No further light is thrown upon it from the records. No account is given of the debate, nor of the arguments

offered, to lead to the conclusion of the majority. It is a tradition which has come down to me from several sources, that the vote against accepting Mr. Bowdoin's offer was carried by the personal influence of John Hancock, who was in favor of rebuilding upon the old spot, — the spot chosen by their fathers, and now for so many years consecrated to the worship of Almighty God. Whether made by Mr. Hancock, or some other person, it was probably some such appeal to sympathies and associations connected with the old spot, that induced the parish to reject an offer so manifestly favorable as that made by Mr. Bowdoin. It is not surprising that such an appeal should have prevailed.

But by whatever influence it was done, Mr. Bowdoin's offer was rejected, and the parish determined to build upon the old spot. The plan being determined upon, and the contracts made, the society, having been previously invited to worship, while their house was building, with the First Church, assembled for the last time in the old church on the 10th of May, 1772.

"The building of churches," says Dr. Palfrey, in his notes, "was a less simple operation in those times than the present. This was engaged in as a very serious enterprise." He then gives the following particulars in relation to its erection.

"The old house was taken down, and the ground cleared, between May 14th and 18th. Mr. Copely and Major Dawes presented plans for the new building. The former was rejected on account of the expense. The latter was adopted. June 23d, the corner stone was laid by Major Thomas Dawes, the architect, in the foundation at the southwest corner of the house, having this inscription,

"June 23d,
1772.
S. Cooper, D. D.,
Minister.

The day after laying the corner-stone, some of the committee, taking into consideration what was proper to be done with a stone taken out of the southeast corner of the original building, having the inscription Benjamin Walker thereon, ordered the figures 1699 to be added thereto, being the year that the first meeting-house in Brattle Street was founded, and then the stone was laid in the foundation of the southeast corner of the new house. The name of the Hon. John Hancock, Esq., was inscribed on one of the rustic quoins [of Connecticut stone] at the southwest corner of the new building.

"While the house was erecting, the building committee had their office in the southeast chamber of the house in Brattle Square, then occupied

by Mrs. Turell. By the autumn they had exhausted their funds, and were largely in debt. A subscription for pews was accordingly opened, each subscriber advancing not less than £30. The house cost £8,000. The most valuable pews were appraised at £50. When it was occupied several remained unsold, and there was still a debt of £750 to the mechanics, which was not paid off till the ministry of Dr. Thacher. ..... There were seventy-five 'free gift' subscribers. The most liberal subscriptions were those of Governor Hancock and Governor Bowdoin. The latter gave £200. The former gave £1,000, reserving to himself 'the particular disposition of the sum and the beginning and completing a mahogany pulpit, with its full furniture, a mahogany deacon's seat and communion table, under his own direction, and the providing for the accommodation of poor widows and others belonging to the society, who are reputable persons and unable to furnish themselves with seats, &c.' In addition to this he gave a bell. A temporary pine pulpit was first erected, that which was engaged by him of Mr. Crafts not being finished when the house was occupied.

"Some approximation to an estimate of the size of the society, at this period, may be made from the circumstance, that eighty-one voters are recorded by name to have been present at a meet-

ing in 1773, and it is added that there were several others."

The society met for the first time in this building on the 25th of July, 1773. But they were not long permitted to enjoy it unmolested, and worship in it in peace and quietness. The troubles of the Revolution came on. The congregational clergy were to a man full of the fire of patriotism, and strenuous supporters of the cause of the Colonies. No class of citizens were more deeply interested or more efficient. By their prayers, their sermons, their conversation, their influence, and their example, they endeavored to the utmost to sustain the courage and firmness of the people, to uphold the cause of liberty, and secure the deliverance of their country. In efforts of this kind Dr. Cooper had been conspicuous, and had thereby rendered himself obnoxious to the Provincial authorities and to the soldiers quartered in the town.

"On the 16th of April, 1775," writes Dr. Cooper, in a journal, some fragments of which have been preserved and which I have been permitted to see, "the troubles in Boston increasing, and having received several menaces and insults, particularly at Mrs. Davis's from an officer, I left Boston by the advice of friends, and came with my wife to Mr. Savage's, at Weston, designing to ride in the country for the recruiting of my

health, and to return to Boston in a few weeks, where I left my dear child, all my plate, books, furniture, and so forth." He made Weston his head-quarters for several days, riding about on horseback to the neighboring towns. He was at Lexington, and dined with the Rev. Mr. Clarke, the minister, in company with Mrs. Hancock, the day before the battle. Immediately after that event, Boston was shut up and besieged by the Colonial troops, and Dr. Cooper did not return till after the evacuation, March 17th, 1776. I have been unable to learn where he passed this period. The minister absent, and most of the congregation dispersed, religious services were not regularly held after the 16th of April, 1775, though they were occasionally held during the summer.

In a journal of Timothy Newell, deacon of this church, covering the period of the siege, the original, or a copy of which, now in the possession of our fellow-worshipper, Stephen P. Fuller, I have been permitted to examine, we find notices of several events of interest to us, which occurred at that time.

On the 15th of September, 1775, General Gage gave leave to a Scotch clergyman, whose character was in no very good repute, to preach in the town on the next Sunday. Application was accordingly made to Deacon Newell for the use

of Dr. Cooper's church for the service. For the accommodation of the few worshippers of Brattle Street Church remaining in town, arrangements had been made for Dr. Eliot to preach there the next Sunday. Deacon Newell, therefore, declined to accede to the request, or rather the demand, and refused to deliver the keys of the church to the applicants, who had an order from General Gates to that effect. He waited upon the General and expostulated with him on the subject. He insisted that the man proposed was of infamous character, and that it was an insult to the society to ask for the church for his use, and urged him to withdraw the order he had given. General Gage promised to reconsider the matter; but in twenty minutes after Deacon Newell withdrew he was waited upon by the provost, with a peremptory order for him to deliver the key immediately, which he accordingly did.*

* In the journal alluded to, Deacon Newell gives the following full account of this matter.

"14th September, 1775. Messrs. Auchinclosh, Morrison, and another person came to me, as three Scotchmen had been before. They showed me a paper directed to me, setting forth, that the Rev. Mr. —— —— was permitted, by his Excellency Gen. Gage, to preach, and desired he may have the use of Dr. Cooper's meeting-house, signed by about thirty Scotchmen and others, viz..... etc. I desired they would leave the paper for my consideration. They did not choose I should keep it, and began to urge their having the house.

On the 13th of October, the house was inspected by Colonel Birch, with a view to make it

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For answer, I told them, I looked upon it a high insult to that society, their proposing it, and turned my back upon them and so left them.

"P. M. Messrs. Black, Dixon, and Hunter came and told me his Excellency the General had consented they should have our meeting-house, and desired I would deliver them the key. I told them, when I see such an order I should know how to proceed. One said to me. So, you refuse to deliver the key? I answered, with an emotion of resentment, Yes, I do.

"15th. As I was attending a funeral, the provost, Mr. Cunningham, came to me, and told me it was his Excellency, the General's command I should immediately deliver him the key of Dr. Cooper's meeting-house; I replied, I must see the Governor. He told me he would not see me till I had delivered the key. He left me in a great rage, and swore he would immediately go and break open the doors. I left the funeral, and proceeded to the Governor's, calling upon Capt. Erving to go with me. He excused himself, and so I went alone. The Governor received me civilly. I addressed myself to him, and most earnestly entreated him, that he would be pleased to withdraw his order, urging that Dr. Eliot, in order to accommodate our people, was to preach in said meeting-house the next Sabbath, or the Sabbath after, and that the person they proposed was a man of infamous character, which had it been otherwise, I should not oppose it, etc., and I desired his Excellency would consider of it. He told me he would, and that I might keep the key, and if he sent for it, he expected that I would deliver it. So left him. I had not been, I believe, twenty minutes from him, before the provost came, with a written order to deliver the key immediately, which I did accordingly. When I first urged the Governor to excuse my delivering the key, for the reasons given, he replied, that a number of creditable persons

a riding-school for dragoons, but this design was abandoned when it was found that the pillars

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had applied to him, and he saw no reason why that house should not be made use of as well as any other. Gen. Robinson (when I mentioned the preacher being of an infamous character) said he knew no harm of the man; but this he knew, that he had left a very bad service, and taken up with a good one.

"The next day the provost came to my shop. I not being there, he left word, that he came for the apparatus of the pulpit, supposing the curtains and cushions were there. The provost, the same day, came again. I chose not to be there. He left orders to send him the aforesaid, and swore most bitterly, that if I did not send them he would split the door open; and accordingly I hear the same was forced open; and that if Dr. Cooper and Dr Warren were there, he would break their heads, and would drag me in the gutter, etc.

"This being Saturday afternoon, I chose not to be seen. Spent the evening at Major Phillip's; consulted with a few friends, advised still to be as much out of the way as possible. Dr. Eliot invited me to come very early in the morning, (being Lord's day,) and breakfast with him, and also dine; which I did and returned home after nine at night; found a sergeant with a letter had been twice at the house for me. Thus ends a Sabbath, which, exclusive of the insults and perplexities before mentioned, has been a good day to me.

"P. S. Capt. Erving and myself, being the only persons of the Committee remaining in town, I acquainted him of the demand of the General, who advised me, that, if the General insisted on the delivery of the key, to deliver the same. The next week several of our parish thought proper to petition the General. I advised with Foster Hutchinson, Esq., who thought it very proper, and accordingly, at my desire, he drew a petition, but upon further consideration, and hearing of the opinion of the General, he thought it best not to present it."

could not be removed without letting down the roof. "So the pillars saved us," writes Deacon Newell in his journal. But the escape of the church from desecration was only temporary. On the 27th of October, says the journal just quoted, "the Old South was taken possession of for a riding-school and our church for a barracks." Messrs. Gove and Newell, the deacons, were permitted to take down the pews and case up the pulpit and the columns. It was thus occupied as a barrack during the remainder of the siege. This desecration of the churches of Boston was a wanton and unnecessary outrage. It is some evidence of progress even in the conduct of war, that except on the most compulsory necessity such a thing would not be done now. Had our army, in their recent possession of Mexico, pursued the same course in regard to the churches of that city, every newspaper published in the English tongue would have rung with strong condemnation of the sacrilege. General Gage's head-quarters were opposite the church. He told his neighbor and our parishioner, Mr. Turell, that he had no fear for his troops while they were within such walls. The cannon-ball, which is now to be seen over the front door, struck the tower at that point, on the night before the evacuation. It knocked out a few bricks and fell to the ground, was picked up by Mr.

Turell, and preserved by the family. When the church was repaired, in 1825, it was inserted, by order of the Standing Committee, in the spot where it struck.

The British troops left the church in such a filthy and defaced condition, that the work of cleaning, repairing, and replacing the pews occupied several weeks. Mr. Bowdoin advanced the money for this, and subsequently a special tax of eighteen shillings on each pew was levied to meet the expense. The house was first opened for public worship, after the evacuation, on the 19th of May.* The services of that day must

* The last days of the siege are thus noticed in Deacon Newell's journal.

"March 12th. This day and night quiet. The soldiers shut up in their barracks, except some who are about plundering. The wind high at northwest; the inhabitants greatly distressed through fear that the town would be set on fire by the soldiers.

"13th. Wednesday. The inhabitants in the utmost distress thro' fear of the town being destroyed by the soldiery. A party of New York carpenters with their axes going through the town breaking open houses, etc. Soldiers and sailors plundering houses, ships, warehouses, etc. One person suffered four thousand pounds sterling by his shipping being cut to pieces, etc. Another five thousand do., by salt wantonly thrown into the river.

"14th. Thursday. The same as above, except somewhat restrained by the General.

"15th. Friday. The General sent to the selectmen and desired their immediate attendance, which we did accordingly. It was to acquaint us that, as he was about retreating

have been deeply interesting to the regathered flock and pastor, and it is a matter of regret that we have no account of it in the records.

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from the town, his advice was for all the inhabitants to keep in their houses, and tho' his orders were to injure no one, he could not be answerable for the irregularities of his troops. The General told us that the Fury man-of-war would continue in the harbor till the fleet sailed, loaded with carcases and combustibles, that in case the king's troops met with any obstruction in their retreat, he should set fire to the town, which he wished to avoid. That he thought it his duty to destroy much of the property in the town, to prevent its being useful to the support of the rebel army. The General further said to us, that whoever had suffered in this respect (who were not rebels) it was probable that on application to the government they would be considered. That letters had passed between him and Mr. Washington. That however insignificant the character" (title?) "of his Excellency, which to him was very trifling, it ought not to be given to any but by the authority of the king. He observed the direction of our letter to him was His Excellency, General Washington, which he did not approve; nor of whatever, intelligence had been given to the rebels, though in his letters to him he did not charge him with being a rebel. He further said, he had nothing against the selectmen, which if he had, he should certainly have taken notice of it. The General told us that the troops would embark this day, — was told by General Robinson it would be about three o'clock. The regiments all mustered, some of them marched down the wharf. Guards and *chevaux-de-frise* were placed in the main streets and wharves, in order to secure the retreat of the out sentries. Several of the principal streets through which they were to pass were filled with hogsheads, etc., large limbs of trees from the Mall, to prevent a pursuit of the Continental army. They manifestly appeared to be fearful of an attack. The wind proved unfavorable and prevented their embarking. They

Not long after this, in November, 1778, by the will of Lydia Hancock, the society came into possession of the house in Court Street, which has since been occupied as a parsonage by their successive ministers. As the conditions of this bequest are often asked about, and are likely to be more and more canvassed, as the unsuitableness of the spot for a clerical residence becomes more and more manifest, I give them in the words of the will, which are, — "I give and bequeathe unto Messrs. Timothy Newell, Isaac Smith, and Ebenezer Storer, present deacons of the church in Brattle Street in Boston, whereof the Rev. Mr. Samuel Cooper is minister, and to their successors in that office, all that brick dwelling-house and land situated in Queen Street, lately improved by my honored father, Daniel Henchman, Esq., as his mansion-house, to hold the same at and immediately upon the decease of my said mother, unto the said Timothy Newell, Isaac Smith, and Ebenezer Storer, and to the deacons

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returned to their quarters. Soon after, several houses were on fire. The night passed off tolerably quiet.

"16th. Saturday. Rain; great distress, plundering, etc., etc.

"17th. Lord's day. This morning at three o'clock, the troops began to move. Guards, *chevaux-de-frise*, crow feet, strewed in the streets to prevent being pursued. They were all embarked about nine o'clock, and the whole fleet came to sail. Every vessel they did not carry off, they rendered unfit for use. Not even a boat left."

of the said church for the time being, for ever, upon this express condition and limitation, that is to say, that the minister or eldest minister of said church shall constantly reside and dwell in said house, during such time as he is minister of said church; and in case the same is not improved for this use only, I then declare this bequest to be void, and of no force, and order that said house and land then revert to my estate, and I give the same to my nephew, John Hancock, Esq., and to his heirs for ever." By the same will the church also received a bequest of one hundred pounds, the income to be annually appropriated to the relief of the poor. The church voted, "That this society receives these pious, charitable, and generous bequests with great respect and gratitude to the memory of that excellent woman, Madam Lydia Hancock, who was for many years a member of the church in Brattle Street, an ornament to the Christian profession, and an amiable pattern of piety and virtue."

Worthy was she, undoubtedly, to have this said of her, and her memory should be cherished by us with reverence and gratitude. Her intentions, so far as we and all who have preceded and all who may come after us, since her time, are concerned, was generous and noble. The estate in Court Street was a splendid gift for the use of the pastor of the church, and no clergy-

man of the town was housed in such comfort and style as Dr. Cooper, when he first moved into it. It is, however, to be regretted, that her lawyer was not wise enough to remind her, that a perpetual entail of real estate for special uses, in a town destined to grow and expand, was likely in the end to become a public nuisance, and convert what was meant for a charity into an inconvenience, if not an imposition. The intention of Lydia Hancock is clear. She meant that the deacons of Brattle Street Church should always have and hold in their possession for ever, in trust for the use of the minister, a suitable, convenient, agreeable, and proper place of residence. She meant to deprive them of the power to convert this residence to other uses, or to turn it over to the parish for them to make it a source of income; and for this purpose, and, so far as can be ascertained, this purpose only, attached the penalty of forfeiture to the condition, that the minister should reside in the house. Through no fault of the trustees of the parish, or of the occupant of the house, her intention has wellnigh failed, and will fail more and more as time rolls on and the city changes. I cannot but think that there is, I am sure that there ought to be, somewhere in the community, some remedy, — some power that can so interpret the instrument, the will, as to prevent a forfeiture, which was never expected nor de-

sired, from causes which were never anticipated, and therefore not guarded against; and so interpret it also, without injustice to any parties living, and with great justice to the memory of the dead, as to permit an intention clear, manifest, and perpetually charitable, to be carried out fully, faithfully, and for ever.

These are all the events of moment directly affecting the external interests of the parish, that occurred during Dr. Cooper's ministry. It is common to represent the period embraced by his ministry, and extending somewhat beyond it,— the last half of the last century, — as a time of spiritual declension throughout the country. I find it so spoken of in nearly all the pamphlets and documents that I have had occasion or opportunity to examine. Complaints are made of the decay of vital piety, of a want of zealous personal interest in religion, of the creeping in among ministers and congregations of Árian and Arminian sentiments, of a general laxity of faith and practice. So general are these complaints, that I suppose we must admit that there was some foundation for them. The old French war, the war of the Revolution, and all the political excitements, troubles, and momentous events of the times, undoubtedly had a tendency to engross the minds of men, and withdraw their attention, if not from religion as the controlling rule of life, at least

from much interest in its administration, and the questions about its forms and the disputes about doctrines, which the clergy might agitate. I cannot but think, however, that there was something of the power of religion, — a large measure of religious faith and principle, of the spirit of self-sacrifice and of obedience to high convictions of duty, in the generation that carried the country through the struggles of the Revolution. I am not disposed to admit that that struggle was successfully achieved by a generation of men, spiritually dead, whose hearts were destitute of the higher incentives of religious faith.

So far as our own society is concerned, I incline to the opinion, that, with the exception of the period when it was scattered abroad during the siege, it was generally in a good spiritual condition. There was no unusual deadness. The list of baptisms and of additions to the church, imperfect as it probably is, shows that the ordinances were by no means disregarded. This edifice, this splendid temple, erected for the worship of Almighty God, which, if it have rivals, has not been surpassed by any thing that has since been built in the town, — this costly, solemn, and substantial church, which, if it be left untouched by the hand of man, will bid defiance for centuries to the hand of time, — this could not have been built by a society spiritually dead, un-

der a ministry cold, lax, lifeless, inefficient. It may be true, that the men who gathered here Sunday after Sunday, with the pastor who led in their devotions, were all men deeply interested and largely concerned in public affairs, taking a zealous and active part as patriots in the great contest in which their country was engaged ; but it is also true, that *here*, in this house and these services, their patriotism gathered inspiration, and received the spirit and principles that guided its action. This temple, which is a conclusive and satisfactory evidence of the strength, the wealth, and resources of the parish, is also an evidence, equally conclusive and satisfactory, of the spirit and power of the faith which could direct that wealth and strength to noble and godly uses.

Dr. Cooper, who had been for some time in feeble health, died suddenly, on the 29th of December, 1783, at the age of fifty-eight. His funeral was attended with every show of solemnity and sorrow that the times authorized, and both by the parish and by the public generally many marks of affection and respect were manifested to his memory. The funeral sermon, preached by Dr. Clarke of the First Church, was published, together with several obituary notices which appeared in the newspapers of the day. These speak in the strongest terms of his public services and his private virtues, of his rare gifts and graces

as a patriot, a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian divine. One or two passages from Dr. Clarke's sermon will give some idea of the estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries.

"Justly," he says, "should I incur the censure of his friends, and greatly should I injure the memory of Dr. Cooper, should I not say, he was a *peculiar ornament* to this religious society. His talents as a minister were conspicuous to all; and they have met with universal applause. You know with what plainness, and at the same time with what elegance, he displayed the grace of the Gospel. You know with what brilliancy of style he adorned the moral virtues, and how powerfully he recommended them to universal practice. When the joys of a better world employed his discourse, can you ever forget the elevated strains in which he described them? And his prayers, —surely they must be remembered, when his qualifications for the other duties of his office and his many shining accomplishments are forgotten. If those who constantly attended upon his ministry are not warmed with the love of virtue; if they are not charmed with the beauty of holiness, if they are not transported with the free grace of the Gospel, must they not blame their own insensibility? *Remember, therefore, how you have seen, and heard, and hold fast, and repent.*"

Again he says, — "The people of his charge are not the only persons who mourn this event. The death of their honorable pastor is a general calamity. It is severely felt by all our societies; and by that, in a particular manner, which has been so long united with this church in a stated lecture. It is felt by this town, which gloried in him no less as a citizen than a minister of the Gospel. It is felt by the University to whose honor and interests he was passionately devoted. ..... His death will be lamented by this Commonwealth, and most sincerely by some of the first characters in it; for with them he was intimately connected, and they distinguished him by every public token of respect. In one word, his death will be a common loss to these American States; for as a patriot he was no less celebrated than as a divine."

An obituary notice, written probably by Governor Sullivan, speaks of his character and services in equally strong terms of eulogy. From this obituary we learn that his illness was of a nature which precluded much conversation. When he could speak, he expressed his perfect submission to the will of God, said "that his hopes and consolations sprang from a belief of those evangelical truths which he had preached to others," and "declared his great satisfaction in seeing his country in peace, and possessed of freedom and independence."

Unquestionably, it would seem, from all that can be learned of Dr. Cooper, that he possessed in a high degree a rare combination of those qualities which make a man eminently popular and useful in his day. In personal appearance he was uncommonly dignified and pleasing. He had "a most melodious voice," and a natural ease, grace, and fluency both in speaking and writing. To great acuteness and versatility of mind, he added a capacity of severe and patient application. Coming upon the stage at a time when it had not ceased to be admitted that the clerical office gave a right and an opportunity to its incumbent to mingle largely in public affairs, and exert what influence he could in their direction, and at a time, also, when the emergencies of these affairs naturally called forth all the energies and awakened all the interest that any one could put into them, or feel in them, he became one of the most prominent public men of his day, and, as the intimate and confidential friend of some of the leading patriots of the Revolution, exerted an influence which can now hardly be estimated or understood. "It was to him," says Dr. Palfrey, "that the famous letters of Hutchinson were transmitted, which kindled such a flame against the English ministry and their government; and among the writings that alternately stimulated and checked the public mind, in that

season of stormy excitement, there were perhaps none of greater efficiency than those of Dr. Cooper. If other hands launched the lightning, his guided the cloud." As had been the case with his two predecessors, Dr. Cooper was chosen President of the College, and his election was approved by the Board of Overseers, at a meeting held February 10th, 1774. Before the meeting was dissolved, a note was received from him, declining to engage in the duties of the station to which he had been invited.

But though thus prominent and active as a public man, he was not negligent or faithless as a Christian minister; at least I can find no trace of any reproach of this sort.* In the eyes of his contem-

* All that I have ever seen which by implication could be construed as sustaining the contrary of what is here expressed, is the following amusing anecdote, which may be found in Tudor's Life of James Otis.

"Dr. Cooper, who was a man of accomplished manners and fond of society, was able, by the aid of his fine talents, to dispense with some of the severe study that others engaged in. This, however, did not escape the envy and malice of the world, and it was said, in a kind of petulant and absurd exaggeration, that he used to walk to the South End of a Saturday, and, if he saw a man riding into town in a black coat, would stop and ask him to preach the next day. Dr. Chauncy was a close student, very absent, and very irritable. On these traits in the character of the two clergymen, a servant of Dr. Chauncy laid a scheme for obtaining a particular object of his master. Scipio went into his master's study one morning to receive some directions, which the Doctor

poraries, and in all the obituary notices that were written of him, the halo of patriotism that encircles

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having given, resumed his writing, but the servant still remained. The master looking up a few minutes afterwards, and supposing he had just come in, said, 'Scipio, what do you want?' 'I want a new coat, Massa.' 'Well, go to Mrs. Chauncy and tell her to give you one of my old coats'; and was again absorbed in his studies. The servant remained fixed. After several repetitions of this question and answer, the negro says he is afraid to wear another black coat, and when pressed for the reason of his fear, and threatened with punishment if he does not instantly disclose it, he answers, 'Well, Massa, you make me tell, but I know you be angry. I 'fraid, Massa, if I wear another black coat, Dr. Cooper ask me to preach for him.' This unexpected termination realized the servant's calculation; his irritated master burst into a laugh. 'Go, you rascal, get my hat and cane, and tell Mrs. Chauncy she may give you a coat of any color, a red one if you choose.' Away went the negro to his mistress, and the Doctor to tell the story to his friend, Dr. Cooper."

This anecdote has very much the appearance of being the invention of some good story-teller of the day; even if true, and fairly illustrative of character, it only intimates that Dr. Cooper sought what occasional aid he could obtain in services which unaided he never neglected. The number of his published occasional sermons shows that he was accustomed to look at every public event in its connection with the pulpit, and to use it to give interest and efficacy to the services of Sunday. That he gave as much attention and laid out the whole strength and power of his mind in preparations for the pulpit to the extent he would have done had he been less of a public character, may well be doubted; but there is no authentic evidence that he was negligent in these preparations, or in any of the immediate and appropriate duties of his profession.

his name is always embalmed in the odor of sanctity, and the same pen that eulogizes in strongest terms his character and services as a patriot and statesman, does equal honor to his fidelity and devotedness as a Christian teacher and pastor. Certain it is that his society was prosperous, and his preaching attended with interest and edification by as large a number of the distinguished citizens of the town as worshipped at any other church ; and my predecessor, whose competency to judge in the matter will not be questioned, says that "his published sermons, methodical, elaborate, animated, and impressive, would certainly be ranked, in this better day of pulpit eloquence, as productions of unusual merit." After his death, the society appointed a committee to select and publish a volume from his sermons. But the manuscripts were found to be in a condition which would not permit of posthumous publication without great injustice to his memory. In Governor Sullivan's obituary notice, already quoted, his religious sentiments are described as "rational and catholic, being drawn from the Gospel of Christ," and his sermons as avoiding "those nice and needless distinctions which had too often proved detrimental to Christian love and union." In theology, Dr. Cooper was undoubtedly one of the moderately liberal men of his day. A monody published in

the Independent Chronicle, a few days after his death, thus closes its description of his character: —

> "Formed to excel in each ennobled part
> That burnished life, or humanized the heart,
> How did thy bright example recommend
> The parent, partner, citizen, and friend!
> Warm in affection, wise with finished ease,
> 'Intent to reason, or polite to please,'
> In private paths, in every public line,
> The best associate, statesman, and divine." *

Brattle Street, February 17th, 1850.

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* "MONODY OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF SAMUEL COOPER, D. D., PASTOR OF BRATTLE STREET CHURCH, WHO DIED DECEMBER 29TH, 1783.

> "'T is done! from earth the illustrious prophet flies,
> Cooper, the all-accomplished Cooper, dies!
> That bosom, where benevolence abode;
> That form, where nature every grace bestowed;
> That eye, where soft persuasion sweetly smiled,
> Illumed the heart, and every care beguiled;
> That tongue, which long, in virtue's cause, combined
> Reason and truth, and eloquence refined,
> Finished and fraught with all the sacred lore,
> Is cold, — is lifeless, — and must charm no more!
> While the pure spirit which the whole informed,
> Glowed in the bosom, and the features warmed,
> Flown upward, free of elemental clay,
> Explores new mansions in the fields of day.
> From whence sure, Cooper, on thy natal hour,
> Immortal Genius shed his heavenly power,
> Thy tender mind by intuition taught,
> And bathed it in the lucid stream of thought,

Adorned thy heart with every social grace,
And sketched his beauteous image in thy face.
Enlightened wisdom crowned thy youthful head,
Fair Science nursed thee, and the Muses bred;
And Taste, enamored, wooed to vernal bowers,
And wreathed a favorite with her choicest flowers;
While, pleased, Religion to thy care consigned
Her noblest aim, the bliss of human kind.
Yon hallowed temple and thy flock forlorn
Now vainly seek thee on the accustomed morn;
The sacred morn, that ushered holy days
All dedicate to pious prayer and praise.
When on those lips whole auditories hung,
And truths divine came brilliant from thy tongue,
Then did devotion beautifully climb,
In glowing pathos, and the truth sublime;
Extend to future worlds our wondering sight,
And ravish with ineffable delight.
Formed to excel in each ennobled part
That burnished life, or humanized the heart,
How did thy bright example recommend
The parent, partner, citizen, and friend!
Warm in affection, wise with finished ease,
'Intent to reason, or polite to please,'
In private paths, in every public line,
The best associate, statesman, and divine!
And Heaven, that saw thy matchless talents rise,
Embellish earth and ripen for the skies,
Approving saw, — and summoned hence in love,
To gain perfection in the courts above.
Now to those realms, with thee, sweet hope ascends
Where smiling cherubs gratulate their friends,
And all the virtuous, since the world began,
Compose the illustrious choir of angel man.
No sorrow there, no hapless ills molest,
No envy sickens, and no cares infest,
Perpetual gladness and delight sincere
Forbid a pain, a trouble, or a tear,

Celestial, rosy wreaths of glory twine,
And round thy temples weave a crown divine ;
Increase, renewed, thy energetic sight,
To drink intense, unmitigated light,
Breathe on thy lips, of praise, the sweet perfume,
And flush each feature with immortal bloom,
Conduct with acclamations to the throne
Thy spotless spirit, perfect as their own,
There where the crystal streams of pleasure flow,
The beryls sparkle, and the rubies glow,
On golden harps their raptured notes employ,
And turn thy soul to ecstasies of joy.
Yet, O thrice happy shade! if, where thou art,
Our softest feelings touch a seraph's heart,
If spirits, severed from their mortal birth,
Indulge some gentle sympathies of earth,
If in their breasts those sweet emotions move,
Compassion, friendship, lenity, and love,
Ah, view thy sad associates weeping here,
Console the sorrow, and dispel the tear ;
Teach them like thee t' adorn each post assigned,
T' instruct, improve, and elevate mankind ;
Point to their view the path thou still hast trod,
Glorious to thee and pleasing to thy God ; —
But pity grief to human frailty known,
The throbbing sigh, the melancholy moan,
This fond regret for those beloved before,
This tender melting for a friend no more ;
Forgive the tide of undissembled woes
Which for ourselves and for our country flows.
We mourn the loss, — we mourn the virtues fled,
We mourn a brother and a patriot dead."

Independent Chronicle, Jan. 8th, 1784.

SERMON IV.

A WISE MAN'S HEART DISCERNETH BOTH TIME AND JUDGMENT. — Eccl. viii. 5.

I PROPOSE, this morning, to continue our review of the history of this church, and have selected the words of the text because they seem an appropriate description of the character of its fourth pastor, Rev. Peter Thacher, D. D.

After the death of Dr. Cooper, December 12th, 1783, the pulpit was supplied for some weeks by the ministers of the association and neighborhood, who, in turn, preached to the bereaved flock. What arrangements were then made for the supply of the pulpit, I cannot ascertain. In the following spring, Wednesday, the 12th of May, was set apart to be observed, say the records, "as a day of solemn humiliation and prayer, to implore the blessing of God upon this society, and the influences of his Holy Spirit to direct us to the choice of such a minister as shall adorn the Christian character, promote the

honor and interest of his Divine Master, and be of the most important advantage to us and to our children." The deacons were appointed a committee "to ask the favor of the pastors of the associated churches, and the Rev. Mr. Howard of this town to lead in the solemn exercises of the day." It does not appear, however, that this observance was followed by any immediate steps towards the choice of a pastor. Indeed, so far as the records show, nothing more was done in relation to this subject till the following October, when a movement was made to obtain the services of the Rev. Peter Thacher, then settled in the neighboring town of Malden.

Dr. Palfrey, in alluding to the circumstances attending this call, says in a note to his sermon, "As this transaction is recent, and many of those whose judgments differed upon it survive, I do not give a detailed account of it." These survivors must have been far advanced in life when Dr. Palfrey prepared his sermon. In the twenty-five years that have since elapsed, they have all probably passed to their account; and as the "transaction" led to some discussion in the newspapers of the day, and involves the character both of the society and one of its most beloved and honored ministers, it would seem to be just to all the parties concerned that the details of the proceedings should now be briefly stated. These details,

indeed, seem to me to be honorable to all connected with them; at least, looked at calmly at this period, they present nothing to the discredit of either party, — nothing unworthy or unbecoming Christian men, in a matter of such grave importance.

It is due to the memory of Dr. Thacher, that it should be understood at the outset, that there is no evidence to be gathered from our records, or from any other quarter, that he in any way sought the place, or made any efforts to obtain it. There is no evidence even that he ever preached in this church previous to his invitation to become the pastor. The attention of the society seems to have been directed to him from his general reputation and character as a man, a patriot, and a divine, eminent in pulpit gifts and graces, distinguished for his growing ability, fidelity, and devotedness as a Christian minister. As the great body of this parish at that time, together with its late minister and all its prominent members, had been zealous advocates and actors in the cause of American liberty, and as Mr. Thacher had taken a very decided and earnest part in the Revolutionary struggle, it may be that this circumstance had some influence in developing an affinity between him and this vacant parish. The political influence of a minister was still great, and his political position and opinions im-

portant. Liberty and independence had just been secured by a triumph over foreign aggression, but wisdom and patriotism had yet a difficult task to consolidate and secure them from domestic dissension. The society doubtless felt assured, from Mr. Thacher's previous career and known principles, that in him they should secure a minister whose political influence would be directed and exerted in harmony with their own.

The movement in relation to Mr. Thacher was thus commenced and conducted. On the 9th of October, 1784, the following letter was sent to the Standing Committee, requesting them to call a meeting of the society: —

"Brethren, — It having pleased Almighty God to remove by death our late worthy, learned, and amiable pastor, under whom we sat with so much pleasure and delight, and although near twelve months have elapsed since his decease, we are still as sheep having no proper shepherd. Under these circumstances we are liable to scatter and fall into divisions and lessen our numbers. These reflections have discovered to us the importance of having the breach (which God in his providence has made upon us) repaired as soon as possible. It is the opinion of the subscribers, members of the church and congregation, that the Rev. Mr. Peter Thacher, of Malden, if he could be honorably obtained by the mutual consent of

both societies (for upon any other terms we could not wish it), would be the most likely person to unite us, and restore us to that harmony and brotherly love which we ever enjoyed under our late worthy pastor. We therefore wish and desire that the committee would call a meeting of the church and congregation for the purpose of knowing their minds upon this subject, and if the church and congregation should be happily united in their opinion of Mr. Thacher, then to consider what further prudent steps may be taken in order to obtain so good a purpose."

This letter was signed by ninety-three persons, and was accompanied by a note stating that twenty-eight others, whose names were given, and who, for particular reasons, thought it not proper to sign the paper, "were yet as heartily for Mr. Thacher as any persons who had signed it." It was laid before the society at a meeting held the next day, and at an adjourned meeting, held October 24th, after mature deliberation, the following votes were passed: —

"*Voted*, That Rev. Peter Thacher, of Malden, is a gentleman whose sentiments and character are so agreeable to us, that we could wish him to settle with us in the Gospel ministry, if by honorable means he could be obtained.

"It having pleased the Sovereign Director of events in his holy providence to remove from us

by death our late excellent pastor, the Rev. Dr. Cooper, and a great number of the brethren of this church and congregation having, by their written application for calling this meeting, expressed their opinion that the Rev. Mr. Peter Thacher, minister of a parish in Malden, if in an honorable way, and with the consent of our worthy brethren of Malden, he could be obtained to succeed to the pastoral office in this society, would be the most likely person to keep us united, and thereby continue that harmony and brotherly love we ever enjoyed under our late worthy pastor, and it being probable that our brethren in Malden, from a consideration of Mr. Thacher's more extensive usefulness, would consent to his removal to Boston, therefore *Voted*, That this society do concur with our brethren in the above-mentioned opinion, and we do hereby express our intention to invite the Rev. Mr. Thacher to settle with us in the pastoral character, provided our brethren of Malden shall consent thereto. Without whose consent, considering their present relation to Mr. Thacher, we do not mean to give the invitation."

A committee was then appointed, of which Stephen Higginson was chairman, to communicate these votes to Mr. Thacher, and to the deacons of the church at Malden, and to confer with any committee that might be appointed on the part of that church. This committee dis-

charged its duty by transmitting a copy of the votes, and addressing the following letters to the parties interested.

"To the Rev. Peter Thacher: —

"Dear Sir, — The inclosed copies of votes passed by the society who statedly worship in Brattle Square are of themselves fully sufficient to communicate the business of our commission. According to the direction therein contained, we have transmitted like copies to the deacons of your church and parish. As the idea of the removal of a minister from one parish to another, on an expectation of his usefulness being rendered more extensive, is not new either in the opinion or practice of this country, we hope your parish will cordially comply with the almost unanimous wish of our society; for to them it appears evident that your being placed in this town, as minister of so large a congregation, will render those talents with which the wise Disposer of all things has seen fit to bless you a much greater blessing to mankind, than they can be where you are now placed. We are, with sentiments of respect, your humble servants, &c."

"To the Deacons of the Church in Malden: —

"Brethren, — In compliance with the direc-

tion of the society statedly worshipping in Brattle Street in the town of Boston, we transmit you the inclosed votes. They were passed with two dissentients only. The subject of them is delicate as well as important, and we trust that the spirit of them breathes nothing inconsistent with that charity and benevolence which ought at all times to be exercised by one religious society towards another. The idea of removing a minister from one church to another, when his usefulness will thereby be rendered more extensive, is not new. This consideration has prevailed in other cases, and we trust your candor, aided by your inclination to render the Church Universal more enlightened, and to make mankind more happy, will give it weight in your minds. It is not our duty, nor within our commission, to say more upon the subject; but should you appoint a committee to meet with us, we will then confer freely with them on the matter. Your humble servants, &c."

These letters, signed by Stephen Higginson, in behalf of the committee, were sent October 25, 1784. No reply was made by the society in Malden till December 9th. In the mean time, Mr. Thacher himself, after receiving the communication from this society, determined to ask a dismission from his parish at Malden, and his let-

ter to that effect was laid before the meeting called to consider the communication from this society. Through the kindness of that branch of Dr. Thacher's family who still worship with us, I have in my possession the original draft of this letter, with the corrections and erasures. It is due to the memory of Dr. Thacher, that the principal portions of it should be presented to you. It is as follows.

"To the First Church of Christ in Malden:—

"Brethren, — More than fourteen years have elapsed since I entered upon the work of the ministry among you. During this period, I have often addressed you upon occasions the most melancholy and interesting, but in none of them did I ever feel the pain which is excited by my present application.

"The votes of the church and society in Brattle Street, Boston, with respect to my removal thither, will be laid before you at your present meeting. They will inform you that removals are known in the constitutions of these churches, and were frequently practised by our forefathers. They will inform you, (and your own knowledge must convince you of the truth of the observation,) that there is a prospect of my being much more useful to the Church of God there, than I can be here.

"Of this truth I am fully and firmly convinced, and under the influence of this conviction, I must entreat and request of you, that you would consent to my dismissal from the pastoral charge over you. There is not a single hesitation in my mind but that it is my duty to ask such a dismissal, and yours to consent to it; and from the same principles of regard to the interests of religion and our mutual edification and comfort, which I trust led us first to form and so long continue the connection between us, I would desire you to grant this consent, and request my friends, as a token of their regard for me, to vote for such dismission. . . . . I do not wish you to be losers by my departure from you; I am, therefore, ready to give up to you, not only the sixty pounds which you gave me at my settlement, but also the whole sum which is due me from the parish when they shall consent to my removal to Boston; but should I be refused this consent, and be obliged to call a council to determine upon the matter, I should not hold myself bound by this offer, as this measure would be attended with expense, and might put you and me to difficulties totally needless, because they might be prevented by consenting to such a removal. You may be assured that I do not mean to reflect upon you, or to say any thing which may give you pain, ... but I would thank God and you for the union that hath so happily

subsisted between us. I know not that I ever had a personal difference with any one among you. I could wish that we might part in the same love in which we have lived together. I can appeal to your memories, and your records, and your feelings, that I have never discovered a disposition to encroach upon you, or to make a gain of godliness among you. You may be assured that I shall in any future period of my life feel myself happy in serving you, or any individual among you, to the utmost of my poor ability. May the Almighty overrule your proceedings and my conduct to his glory and the good of his Church. I subscribe myself, your affectionate friend and pastor,

"PETER THACHER."

In the discussion which was had of this matter at the time, Dr. Thacher was censured by some at this point in the proceedings. It was thought by some, that this letter ought not to have been sent at this precise moment; that the parish should have been left free to act as they might deem best on the communication which had been received from the church in Brattle Street. But the question arises, How could the parish act? They could not reply to the society in Brattle Street, "You shall not have our minister; we will not release him"; because, if he had wished

to go, they could not, with proper self-respect, wish to retain him. They could not reply, "You may have our minister if you want him; we are willing to release him if he desires to go"; for this would be interpreted into an undue readiness, if not a desire, to have him leave them. The society could have done nothing, therefore, but refer the matter to their pastor for his decision. It was virtually referred to him, by the votes of this church, copies of which were sent to him and to the deacons of his society. He was the proper person to take the next step in the proceedings, by signifying to his parish his wish and purpose in regard to the communication from Brattle Street. He took that step by asking a dismission, and in so doing brought the matter before his parish in the only form in which they could act upon it. How the parish acted upon it may be learned from their letter to this church, bearing date December 9th, 1784.

"To the Church and Congregation in Brattle Street, Boston: —

"Brethren, — Your letter of the 25th of October last occasioned great surprise and concern to us. It was upon a subject important and delicate to the highest degree. Were we to say that we were satisfied with the principles or practice of removals, we should tell you that which

was not true ; were we to express an approbation of the steps you have taken, or to say we believed you to have done to us as you would be done by, in this case, we should equally violate the truth. For though we mean not to reproach or censure you, yet we cannot but suppose that you have done that, the lawfulness of which may at least admit of much doubt. We can assure you that your application alone, let it have been attended with any circumstances whatsoever, would never have induced us to part with our minister. We were at peace with him and among ourselves ; we had no desire nor inclination to dissolve the connection between us. We wished it to continue till death should have parted us. But Mr. Thacher himself hath applied for a dismission from us ; *that* which we should never have granted to your desires alone, we have given to his. The connection between us is dissolved, and he is dismissed from his pastoral relation to us.

"This event has involved us in a situation very unhappy. We are as sheep without a shepherd, and we know not when, nor how, our loss may be supplied. Very great damage upon temporal as well as spiritual accounts will accrue to us in consequence of it. We despise the idea of bargaining for a minister. Poor as we may be in comparison of many others, we are not yet reduced

to the necessity of asking an alms; but we submit it to your justice and generosity, and to your own principles of the propriety of removals, whether it is not suitable and proper for you to make us such a compensation upon pecuniary accounts, as may in some measure prevent us from feeling many distressing consequences which might otherwise take place from this measure, for we cannot doubt that your application had its influence in urging Mr. Thacher to ask a dismission from us.

"We have, therefore, appointed Mr. Joseph Perkins, Thomas Hill, James Kettell, Samuel Sprague, and Hymond Bradbury, a committee to confer with you upon the subject, if you should think it proper. And although we feel aggrieved and distressed, yet Christian charity obliges us to wish that the Gospel may flourish among you, and that Mr. Thacher may be a blessing to you and to your children after you. We are in the name and by order of the First Church and Parish in Malden, your brethren and friends."

This letter, signed by the committee named in it, was laid before this society at a meeting held December 12th. It was immediately voted, "That the committee that had already acted in the matter be authorized to confer with the committee of the parish in Malden, and to remove all

cause of grievance." This committee subsequently reported a recommendation, that three hundred pounds be raised by subscription, and paid to the society in Malden, "to satisfy their extra expenses" in settling another minister, on condition that the arrears of salary due to Dr. Thacher should previously be paid. This was accordingly done; the money was paid on the 7th of June, 1785, and the receipt of the committee of the society in Malden stands on our books of that date in the following words: —

"We, the subscribers, in the name and by the order of the First Parish in Malden, do hereby acknowledge to have received of Timothy Newell and others, a committee of the church and congregation in Brattle Street, Boston, the sum of three hundred pounds, lawful money, to and for the use of said parish in Malden, which sum was voted and generously given by said congregation in Brattle Street, in order to defray the extra expenses to which we may be exposed in consequence of the removal of the Rev. Peter Thacher from Malden to Boston; and we do acknowledge that, while Mr. Thacher continued with us, he had just cause to complain of the want of punctuality in our payments to him, there being the sum of two hundred and nine pounds fourteen shillings and eight pence due to him

when he left us. We do hereby likewise declare, that we do not charge the said church and congregation in Brattle Street with any unchristian or unfair conduct in their application respecting Mr. Thacher's removal from us to that society.

(Signed,) JOSEPH PERKINS,
THOMAS HILL,
JAMES KETTELL."

Mr. Thacher, meantime, was invited, at the meeting held December 12th, to become the pastor of the church. He accepted the invitation, and was installed on the 12th of January, 1784, Dr. Osgood of Medford preaching the sermon.

In reviewing all the circumstances connected with "*this transaction*," there does not appear to be any thing to condemn in either party. Several newspaper articles appeared at the time, and some poetical wit of the day made the matter the theme of some verses, published in the Columbian Centinel,* in which the letter of our

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* "*For the Centinel.*

"MESSRS. PRINTERS,—

"Please give the following a place in the Centinel, and you will oblige a customer: —

"Christ's *wealthy* Church in Br-tt-e St—t,
His poorer flock in M-ld-n greet,

committee to Dr. Thacher is well hit off; but no wrong done by any party can be pointed out.

With hearts *brim* full of Christian love,
They wish them blessings from above.
Dear Sirs, of late we lost our Pastor,
And mourn sincere the sore disaster;
Because we clearly can foresee
Our sheep much scattered will be,
Unless we should of God's free grace
A shepherd get to fill his place.

"Now having sought Divine direction,
We thought it fit, on due reflection,
To tempt the parson of your church
To leave his people in the lurch;
Though few have heard him scarcely thrice,
Yet most *believe* he preaches nice,
And is a man that 's fitted quite
To make us all in him unite.
On trial *fair*, we plainly find
Our *pious* scheme well suits his mind;
Then what remains for us to do
But settle matters right with you?
Sure if you cannot him maintain,
Of us you ought not to complain;
Now therefore send him off to us,
And we will fill his mouth and purse.
The cash you owe him, as 't is said,
Shall very cheerfully be paid;
Another preacher, should you want,
A settlement for *him* we 'll grant;
Thus to the world we 'll fully show
That naught but *honor* we 've in view.
Yet stronger arguments than these
We can produce with greater ease,
And make it clear that we are right,
And act by help of *Gospel* light.

The preliminary proceedings of this parish, in expressing a favorable opinion of Mr. Thacher,

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"From best of men we often hear,
That you 've no *souls* to save (they fear),
That parts like *his* in napkin lay,
So long as he shall with you stay,
Much time among you he has taught,
And labored all that while for *naught*,
To church no *single soul could add*,
To make his pious heart 'full glad.'
But, in *this* place, his talents *five*
To occupy would make us thrive;
From day to day *our* church would grow
And make at *last* a *goodly* show.
These *weighty* reasons, as we trust,
You 'll plainly see are good and *just*,
And freely grant us our request, —
Because *we* think it for the best.

"And now we all, with *one* accord,
Subscribe your brethren in the Lord."

Massachusetts Centinel, Dec. 11, 1784.

"*For the Centinel.*

"MESSRS. EDITORS, —

"The following, it is requested, may be communicated to the public, through the channel of the Centinel.

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"I was called to preach about fifteen years ago in a neighboring town; in a short time after, they persuaded me to become their pastor. I am now called the shepherd of their flock; they look upon me as their guardian; I am beloved by them with a tenderness that cannot be expressed; they discover, also, such a regard for my family and contribute all in their power towards its support; in short, there seems to be such an exertion for my welfare and happiness, that I

and a desire to obtain him as their minister, could the matter be arranged to the mutual satisfaction

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have felt till lately the greatest satisfaction possible. But I have lately had an offer from a congregation (not far distant) of more than double what I now get, for the support of my family, if I will leave my flock and become their shepherd. Although I am certain of living in affluence, yet there seems to be a check, for when I first began to preach, I admonished against all the allurements of this world. And although there is a probability of laying up something handsome every year, yet I frankly confess that before I was tempted I rested satisfied.

"But I have other difficulties, which often arise in my mind. One is, whether it will be acting upon the true principles of religion to leave them because they are poor (for this is the only reason), and it is evident that they cannot go to the charge of settling another minister. Another difficulty is, whether I ought not to comfort them by setting an example to bear up under their poverty, as I expected from the beginning to share with them the troubles as well as the pleasures of life.

"A COUNTRY MINISTER.

"Quere. Whether if I leave them the fault will not be extenuated by the tempters taking part with the tempted?"

Massachusetts Centinel, Jan. 12, 1785.

"*For the Centinel.*

"MESSRS. PRINTERS, —

"Please publish the following in answer to your 'Country Minister,' and convince me that 'uninfluenced by party,' etc.: —

"I am a poor fellow, and have been a long time in some difficulty about leaving the man I now live with; for you must know, that a few years since I engaged to live with a gentleman as a servant at so much a year; and the Lord

and concurrence of all the parties concerned, were perfectly fair and Christian; at least, to say they were not, would be very harsh judgment. Mr. Thacher had an inadequate support at Malden. What was promised was not paid. He

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knows that my wages were but just sufficient to purchase my clothes. We agreed so well at first, that I positively declared that I never would leave him. At last he became very negligent about paying me; I remonstrated with him, and he *promised* me more punctuality; and I believe him one of the best men existing as to *promises*. I lived upon them as long as I could, for *money* I could not get. At length I was obliged to begin and continue borrowing, until my friends are effectually tired out, and at this time I am over head and ears in debt; nor do I see any prospect but that I must go to jail very soon.

"Now, Messrs. Printers, here 's a gentleman who knows what a faithful servant I have been under all my difficulties, and he has offered me, if I will leave my old master and come and live with him, to add to my wages, and advance me a part to enable me to discharge some of my debts. I have thought seriously of this proposal; I like my old master exceeding well, and if I could get any thing but *promises* from him, I would continue in my present situation. I had concluded to leave him, and should have done it by this time if I had not seen in your last Centinel a piece signed 'A Country Minister.' He raised some doubt in my mind, whether, as I had once engaged to live with him, he paying me so much, I ought not to continue with him after he failed in his part of the contract; and whether I ought not to stay and *starve* it out, rather than alter my condition, and procure for myself and family a decent living. If your Country Minister will set me right, he will much oblige

"A County Booby."

Massachusetts Centinel, Jan. 15, 1785.

had for some time contemplated removal, and felt that it was necessary. Unless there are clear reasons to the contrary, any minister is justified in interpreting the non-payment of his salary as an evidence of a want of interest and satisfaction in his services; an intimation, at least, that no strong objection will be made to his resigning his post. Under these circumstances, the communication from Brattle Street simply induced Mr. Thacher to do at once what he had for some time felt he should ultimately be compelled to do, — ask a dismission from his people. He asked that dismission, and was then invited to settle here. In the subsequent negotiations between this society and the parish in Malden, looked at in a proper light, there is nothing to censure. What was the pecuniary ability of the society in Malden at that period cannot now be ascertained; but clearly it was not a rich society, or it would not have been in such arrears to its minister. Our society had ample means. The Malden parish had sustained a loss, — a loss which it would have had to sustain probably in a few months; but the time was hastened by the action of this parish. It needed aid, or it would not have asked for it, or accepted it. This society was able to give it, and did give it. The whole thing was merely the expression of sympathy and aid from a strong society to a weaker one, and in the giving and in

the receiving of it there was nothing unchristian or unworthy. Both societies, and the descendants of all the parties concerned, may look back upon this whole transaction with no feelings of shame or mortification.

Notwithstanding these unpleasant circumstances connected with his removal from Malden, Dr. Thacher entered upon his ministry here with the most favorable regard of the whole parish and of the town, and during the seventeen years of its continuance, the society was eminently peaceful and prosperous.

I do not find in the records much that it would be particularly interesting to notice.

In August, 1792, "some proposals were made by members of the church to vary its proceedings as to the mode of admitting to ordinances." It is not stated what these proposals were. We are left to infer their character from the votes passed at a meeting held four weeks later, to consider and act upon them. These votes are as follows: — "That no more explicit confession of sin should be required of any person, as a term of admission to either of the ordinances, than is expressed in the covenant used in this church on admission thereto"; and, "That the admission of members to full communion be in future confined to the church, without their being propounded to the congregation." A proposition that persons

who had renewed their baptismal covenant, upon standing propounded for one month and no objection being made, should be considered members of the church in full communion, without any further or new profession of their faith, was indefinitely postponed. Thus it would appear that the proposals were in behalf of greater liberty in regard to the administration of the ordinances; that two of them were granted, and a third was refused.

During Dr. Thacher's ministry two important changes were made in the administration of the musical part of the services of public worship, namely, the introduction of the organ and the appropriation of money to encourage and secure good singing. The former was done by a vote of the parish, passed December 19th, 1790; the latter, by a vote passed in 1802. The introduction of the organ was not effected without considerable opposition and difficulty. The records state that the following vote was passed "*nemine contradicente*"; namely, "That an organ be introduced into this society as an assistant to the vocal music of psalmody, which is esteemed an important part of public worship, provided it can be obtained by voluntary subscription, and without laying a tax upon the proprietors or occupiers of pews for the purpose." But notwithstanding no vote stands recorded against

it, it is well known that many were opposed to it, and that for several years it was never played but as an accompaniment to the singing; no interludes were allowed between the verses of the hymn, and no symphonies at the opening and close of worship. I heard it related, also, shortly after my induction to the pastoral office here, by one whose great age, and at that time retentive memory, gave authority to the story, that, when the vessel containing the organ arrived below in the harbor, and was waiting for a fair wind to come up, a wealthy gentleman of the parish, who had refused to subscribe toward it, waited upon Dr. Thacher, and offered to pay into the treasury of the church, for the benefit of the poor, the whole cost of the organ and the freight, if he would have it thrown overboard below the light-house. The organ cost five hundred pounds, and the expense of altering the gallery to put it up amounted to about one hundred and twenty-eight pounds. The upper gallery, formerly appropriated to colored persons, and which then projected as far as the present organ loft, was carried back; two pillars corresponding to those on the sides of the church were removed, and the two smaller columns that now support the front gallery, or organ loft, were erected. At this time, also, the pedestals of all the columns were abridged. To prevent this being done by individuals, the follow-

ing vote had been passed seventeen years before, in July, 1773: — "It having been suggested that the pedestals of those pillars that incommode pews might be liable to alteration by the proprietors of such pews, unless the society pass some vote to prevent it, and whereas such pews have been set at a less rate on account of said inconvenience, *Voted*, That no alteration be made in those pillars or pedestals, nor in any other of the pillars and pedestals of the meeting-house on any pretence whatever."

Dr. Thacher's ministry lasted nearly eighteen years. Though he made his flock his first charge, and failed in no duty which he owed to them, he was, as has been the case with all the ministers of this church, much of a public man, taking a hearty interest and an active part in all efforts and enterprises for the public good. Under the accumulated labors which these involved, his health began to fail at the opening of the present century. Having suffered much for some months previous, and finding no relief from repeated short respites from labor and excursions into the country, he embarked at this port on the 15th of November, 1802, for Savannah, Georgia, in the hope that a winter spent in the genial climate of a Southern State would give ultimate relief to his disease, — pulmonary consumption. This hope, however, was destined to speedy extinction. He

arrived at Savannah on the 3d of December, and on Thursday, the 16th of that month, he expired. He was accompanied to Savannah by his son, the late Judge Thacher, whose name and memory are still honored among us. I have in my possession a very interesting manuscript account, written by Judge Thacher at the time, of the voyage from Boston, and of the last hours of his father. From this it appears that he was received into the house of Samuel Howard, Esq., and treated with the utmost kindness and care. He was attended by Dr. Kollock, the most skilful physician of the place, and visited by the Rev. Robert Smith, pastor of the Presbyterian church at Savannah, who prayed with him a few hours before his death, and preached an eloquent sermon on the next Sunday, when his funeral obsequies were attended. One incident is related, which I notice, not because it is peculiar or important in itself, but because it illustrates the influence and confirms the importance of early religious culture. On laying down for the last time, in the early part of the evening, a few hours before his death, he repeated the nursery prayer, —

> "Now I lay me down to sleep,
> I pray the Lord my soul to keep;
> If I should die before I wake,
> I pray the Lord my soul to take";

and turning to his son, said, "My son, this little

prayer I have not omitted to repeat on going to bed for forty years. This may be the last time. I charge you never to omit it." There is nothing peculiar in this incident. It is related of a great many persons, and it has occurred probably innumerable times when it has not been related. I notice it merely because it shows that this brief, comprehensive nursery prayer, which a child's lips can utter and a child's mind understand, has been the stay and help of the most mature and advanced piety, and has kept alive some feeble spark of religion in many a seared and worldly heart.

Dr. Thacher's remains were brought to Boston, but did not arrive until after the funeral services, which, like those of his predecessor, were held by the parish at the lecture preceding the first communion of the year. The sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Emerson of the First Church, and the scene and the service are probably distinctly remembered by several who are here present to-day.

Dr. Thacher was born in Milton, March 21st, 1752. His parents resided usually in this town, and at the time of his birth were only stopping emporarily in Milton, because of the small-pox which was raging here ; so that the first four ministers of this church were natives of this town, and two of them were raised up by Providence

from among the youth of the congregation itself. Dr. Thacher took his degree at Cambridge in 1769, and in September of the following year he was settled at Malden. In the vigor of early manhood, of an ardent temperament, with high-toned principles of liberty, he took an active part in all the measures that preceded and accompanied our Revolutionary struggle. He was a delegate from the town of Malden to the convention that formed the State Constitution, and he closed the session of that convention with prayer. After his removal to this parish, he soon became an active member of the various literary and charitable institutions of the town ; and for fifteen out of the seventeen years of his ministry here, he was chaplain to one or both branches of the Legislature. He received his degree of Doctor in Divinity from Edinburgh in 1791. The memory of Dr. Thacher is still fresh in the minds of some living, and we are aided in forming an estimate of his character and talents by the large number of his published sermons that have been preserved. The style of these sermons, so far as I have had opportunity to examine them, is fresh, vigorous, clear, giving evidence of a frank, decided, independent mind, that had no object but truth, and no purpose but to express it honestly and strongly. From his first settlement in Malden, which occurred in his nineteenth year, and through life,

he sustained a high reputation as a preacher. In a memoir of him, which appeared in the eighth volume of the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, the first volume published after his death, it is said, that "no young man ever preached to such crowded assemblies," and that "Whitefield called him the young Elijah." The following passages from this memoir may help us to form some further idea of his character: —

"There were manifested indications of a serious mind when he was very young, so that it was observed concerning him, that he never was a child. He certainly preferred books of piety and the conversation of persons older than himself to the diversions of the childish age. An uncommon gravity of deportment, and measured periods of discourse, in which it is said he imitated his father's manner, drew the attention of others, and became the subject of their remark. It was then predicted that he would be a preacher, and add another of the name to the list of worthies whose praise was in the churches. . . . . He early composed sermons and essays. Divinity was his favorite study. He was more fond of visiting the schools of the prophets than walking in academic groves, and eagerly looked forward to the time when he should display his eloquence and evangelical zeal in the pulpit. He was more qualified to appear as a divine when he

received his degree of Bachelor of Arts, than many who have studied theology through a long course of years. . . . . .

"It would be wrong to omit certain traits in the character of Dr. Thacher which show his moral worth. He was a man of singular integrity. A stranger to artifice and deceit, he could not disguise his feelings, but expressed often his disapprobation of them in others. He preferred to have his manners styled rough and his plainness of speech censured by his acquaintance, rather than be thought capable of duplicity in his words and actions, — a polite address, an unassuming air, a winning manner, have their attractions, but nothing can make up for want of honesty. . . . . As a friend, he had the confidence of those who knew him; those who were most intimate will preserve in their memories the tokens of his affection and kindness. If, in the exuberance of unguarded familiarity, he said any thing to hurt their feelings, it gave him pain, for he meant not to be uncourteous. His talents for conversation were remarkable. Some have thought he exerted these too often, and in public speaking took too large a share of the debate; but when he had been too *slow* to hear and *quick* to speak, he was sensible of his error, and disposed to make either a serious or facetious apology. He was fond of anecdotes, especially such as illustrated the man-

ners of New England. In the history of Massachusetts, civil and ecclesiastical, he was more than commonly versed, having read it from his childhood, and also that part of the history of England which exhibits the folly and tyranny of the Stuarts, the usurpation of Cromwell, and the brief authority of the Commonwealth. The essays, sermons, and memoirs of those times, he could quote, from the manly testimonies of Ludlow to the crude excrescences of Goodwin and Hugh Peters."

In early life, Dr. Thacher's religious opinions were rigidly Calvinistic, but gradually became more and more Arminian. During his latter years he was ranked among the conservative, but liberal clergy of his day, and "stood," says Dr. Palfrey, "on ground like that of the late Dr. Osgood and Dr. Lathrop," of the former of whom I have heard it related, that he described his position by saying that his pulpit was five miles from Cambridge and fifteen from Andover, and that, theologically, he held about the same relation to the Divinity Schools of the two places.

Mr. Emerson, in the sermon preached at his funeral obsequies, a few passages from which will give us some idea of the estimation in which he was held by his contemporaries, says of him, "He was illustrious for his natural powers. His soul was lodged in a person possessing the fad-

vantages of a noble stature, a commanding mien, a full and steady eye, a countenance pleasing and expressive, a mouth formed for ready utterance, and a voice of wonderful sweetness, variety, and strength. With these qualities of body, so eminently useful to a public speaker, the Father of Lights had united a sound understanding, a fancy of uncommon sprightliness, a tenacious memory, and a correct judgment. He was illustrious for his gift of extempore prayer. It seemed as if the melody of his tones awoke his own devotion, and imparted life to all who joined him in the sacred service. No concourse was so numerous, no case so intricate, no occasion so sudden, as to produce apparent confusion in his thoughts, or the smallest hesitation in utterance. He had a faculty of waiving and resuming at pleasure the subject of petition, and of waiting, so to speak, for the moment of inspiration to amplify and entreat.

"He was illustrious for his success. In the course of his ministry, and especially since his residence in the metropolis, his labors have been greatly blessed. This is evidenced by the number of communicants in this church, by his very acceptable visits in the chambers of the sick and the dying, and by his praise which is in the Gospel throughout all our churches. His useful services were not confined to the church. Nothing patriotic, nothing humane, was foreign to his feel-

ings. He successfully pleaded the cause of the poor in the ear of the rich, as well as before the throne of Almighty compassion. He interested himself in schemes of private beneficence and public utility, which his acquaintance with the wise and powerful enabled him essentially to serve. In the state he was the uniform and influential supporter of rational liberty. Equally the foe of licentiousness and oppression, he employed his talents as opportunity presented in defeating the machinations of wicked, and supporting the measures of upright and consistent rulers. In short," says Mr. Emerson, "his activity, punctuality, and faithfulness in discharging his pastoral duties, his reverence for the Lord's day and the Lord's house, his labors in the cause of human institutions, his concern and endeavors for the propagation of our holy religion, the interest he took in the increasing usefulness and reputation of our University, his aids in furthering the progress of the arts and sciences generally, and his wishes, his writings, and his prayers in behalf of the independence, liberty, peace, and glory of our beloved America, are so many proofs of the worth and brilliancy of his example."

The man of whom his contemporaries spoke thus, must have had intellectual and moral attributes of no ordinary stamp, and when we remember that the ministry of Dr. Thacher covered

"the most depressed and perilous period which religion has ever witnessed in New England, — the period of the French Revolution," and consider that during this period this church was peaceful and prosperous, spiritually alive and earnest, that the strong minds and warm hearts that gathered here were baptized into the spirit of the Gospel, kept within the fold of Christ by the faithful labors and quickening powers of the pastor, we shall readily come to the conclusion, that among the wise and good and devoted men who have stood in this desk, not least to be honored and cherished stands the name and the memory of Peter Thacher.

Brattle Street, March 24th, 1850.

SERMON V.

HE WAS A BURNING AND A SHINING LIGHT. — John v. 35.

In our review of the history of this church, we have now reached a period distinctly within the personal recollections of many who hear me. Dr. Thacher died December 16th, 1802. Early in the following year, the society invited the Rev. William Ellery Channing "to preach with them on probation, with a view to settle with them as their pastor." He declined the invitation, on the ground that his health would not permit him to take charge of so large a parish, or preach in so large a church. He subsequently accepted the invitation of the society in Federal Street, which at that time was a less numerous congregation, with a small church. The growth and prosperity of that society under the distinguished ministry of Dr. Channing are facts within the memory of many present. Early in the autumn of 1803, the society invited the Rev. Abiel Abbott, who had recently been dismissed from the pastoral charge

of the First Church in Haverhill, to preach here four Sabbaths as a candidate for settlement. This invitation was declined, Dr. Abbott having previously accepted an invitation to settle in Beverly, where he had a long, harmonious, and eminently useful ministry.

The pulpit was supplied by various temporary arrangements, till November, 1804, when Joseph Stevens Buckminster was engaged to preach four Sabbaths as a candidate, at the expiration of which, on the 9th of December, he was invited to take charge of the parish as its pastor. This invitation was accepted in a letter dated December 23d, which some of you may like to hear. In directness, simplicity, and comprehensiveness, it might serve as a model for letters of the kind.

"To the Committee of the Society in Brattle Street: —

"Gentlemen, — No rule of propriety or delicacy requires me to forbear all expression of pleasure at testimonies of approbation and good-will which have marked the proceedings of your society; neither am I sensible of any advantages which would result from a longer delay of an answer to an invitation adopted with such unanimity and recommended by such encouragements.

"But while I give you this early intimation that I have concluded to accept your proposals,

I should be unfaithful to myself and to you if I did not express my apprehension that you will be called to overlook many deficiencies and excuse many mistakes in one whom youth and consequent inexperience, united with precarious health, will ask for all the indulgence which his past intercourse with you encourages him to expect.

"If, in the course of events, a favorable opportunity should occur of associating with me another pastor, much of our mutual anxiety might be relieved, and the interests of a numerous society judiciously consulted. But if the cause of Christ here should not be found to suffer from the insufficiency of my single efforts, I trust I shall be disposed to thank God, in whose strength alone the weak are strong, in whose wisdom the inexperienced are wise, and with whose blessing the most feeble labors will not prove unsuccessful. If God should spare my life, I hope some of its most cheering and permanent consolations will be found in the uninterrupted harmony, the increasing affection, and the spiritual improvement of this large society. To instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the wandering, to impress the insensible, to console the afflicted, to reconcile the alienated, to declare the whole counsel of God, and at the same time to give no offence in any thing that the ministry be not blamed, are duties which no pastor can even partially perform, unless encouraged by your

utmost charity, and aided by your public and private prayers. For these, then, I ask; and may that God who has hitherto blessed the religious interests of your society in granting you a succession of luminaries, whose light has not yet departed, though their orbs have set, continue to build you up in faith, charity, purity, and peace, and give you at last an inheritance among them that are sanctified.

"J. S. BUCKMINSTER."

Mr. Buckminster was ordained on Wednesday, the 30th of January, 1805, his father, Rev. Dr. Buckminster of Portsmouth, preaching the sermon. But the hopes of that day were destined to a sudden temporary disappointment. The fatigue and agitation of the Ordination were more than his delicate health and easily excited sensibilities could bear. The following Sunday found him prostrate on a bed of sickness, and for several weeks he was too ill to preach. On commencing his labors in the pulpit, towards the end of March, instead of those appropriate discourses usually expected from a pastor newly inducted, he preached that sermon on the advantages of sickness, which subsequently appeared in the first volume of his printed sermons, and which has probably been read with as much profit, and given as much instruction and consolation, as any one of his discourses.

The events and proceedings of the parish of any historical interest during Mr. Buckminster's ministry were few and simple, and may be briefly stated. About the time of his settlement, the practice of carrying round boxes in church to collect the taxes was discontinued, and the present mode of collecting them adopted. In conformity with the principle of the original Manifesto of 1699, which principle perhaps had fallen into disuse or been violated, it was voted, "That, in the settlement of a minister, all who statedly attend public worship and contribute to the support of a minister, in the parish in Brattle Street, have a right to vote." In 1805, the congregation of the Old South Church, upon invitation of this society, worshipped here during repairs made upon their church. In 1806, the church established the rule, "that, for any one wishing to come to the communion, it was sufficient if his name stood mentioned or propounded from one meeting of the church to another." In 1807, the question of a new hymn-book was agitated, and resulted in continuing Tate and Brady, with an addition prepared by Mr. Buckminster. This addition, exactly as prepared by him, constitutes the second part of the hymn-book now in use. In 1809, a new bell, weighing three thousand four hundred and sixty-nine pounds, was imported from London for the society's use, at an expense of

over two thousand dollars, which was defrayed by subscription. The clock on the west gallery was put up in 1811, and was the gift of the Hon. Mr. Bowdoin. In 1811, Mr. Buckminster, on his own authority, resumed the primitive practice of giving certificates of regular standing and recommendation to those who wished to connect themselves with other churches, without calling the church together to vote such certificate. In relation to this Mr. Buckminster makes the following entry in the records: — "In giving Mr. Samuel Cooper Thacher his recommendation to the fellowship of the church with which he was to be connected, I did not think it necessary to call the church together, as this is directly contrary to the practice vindicated by the founders of our church, and is entirely unnecessary. In the present case I was the more willing to establish this precedent, as there could be no doubt of the great affection and esteem borne to Mr. Thacher, in whose settlement among us I most cordially rejoice." In the spring of 1806, Mr. Buckminster, being worn down by his labors, the terrible malady to which he was subject sensibly increasing in the frequency and violence of its attacks, the society, never wanting in generous kindness to their ministers, sent him abroad for relaxation and travel. He was absent more than fifteen months, visiting all parts of Great Britain and the

most interesting places on the continent of Europe. He returned in September, 1807, with improved health, though still subject to attacks of his disease. Resuming his labors, he devoted himself with unwearied diligence and fidelity to the duties of his office, to the cause of sound learning, of pure piety, and all the best interests, not only of his society, but of the whole community, till June, 1812, when, on the 9th of that month, after a brief illness, he died, to the deep sorrow of many hearts, who have not yet ceased to cherish his memory and regret his loss. It will be seen from this brief statement of facts, that no public changes or events of importance occurred in our history during this period, and that its chief interest is connected with the personal fortunes, life, character, and ministry of Mr. Buckminster. Upon these I would now offer a few remarks for our instruction and improvement.

Mr. Buckminster was born, as is well known, probably, to all of you, in Portsmouth, in May, 1784. Had he been living, he would have been just completing at this time his sixty-sixth year, an age at which many men are in the full vigor of all their powers, and at the height of their usefulness and honor. It is necessary, I think, to consider this to form a just appreciation of the loss which the community sustained in his early death. On

reading his life, and closing the history of his brief, but glorious career, I have often said to myself, "Had Mr. Buckminster lived the allotted age of man, and enjoyed the usual measure of health and strength, with his extraordinary intellectual powers, his enlarged and ever-increasing learning, his clear, practical wisdom, his deep-toned and earnest piety, as free from cant and morbid enthusiasm as from coldness and indifference, his persuasive and commanding eloquence, his peculiar talent at reaching the heart, the conscience, the judgment of others, and giving a direction and guidance to their purposes and efforts, — had he lived with all these intellectual gifts and spiritual graces enlarging and increasing with his years, how much good he would have done, how great, how extensive and beneficial, would have been his influence! How many erratic minds would have been checked in their wanderings by intercourse with his progressive, yet clear and stable mind! How many speculations, vain and idle, that have arisen to mislead the simple, the conceited, and the half-educated, would have been crushed by the superior learning and the clear, calm, penetrating criticism which he would have brought to bear upon them! How different, probably, would have been the condition and character, the features and tendency, of the religious denomination with which he was connected! What an impress

of himself would he have left upon the morals and manners, the habits of thought and action, the religion, the learning, and the philanthropy of the last forty years!" But such speculations are vain, if not sinful. God taketh care of every generation, and meets every emergency of human affairs in his own way. It may be that what we call a loss was in fact a gain, and that through what has been written about him, and what was written by him and has since been published and diffused, the declaration of Scripture concerning Abel, "He, being dead, yet speaketh," has had a fulfilment beyond the reality, beyond all the conceptions we can form of the influence he would have exerted and the good he would have done, had his life been prolonged.

In his case, Providence seems intentionally to have provided a compensation for his sudden, and to our judgment premature death, in the early development and quick maturity of his powers. Scarcely had the earliest years of infancy passed before he gave decided indications of extraordinary intellectual gifts, and of moral and religious elements of character, such as to impress even strangers with the conviction that he was a remarkable child, and would be a marked and distinguished man. What Dr. Kirkland said of Fisher Ames is particularly true of him, — "He did not need the smart of guilt to make him virtuous, nor the

regret of folly to make him wise." He was instinctively moral and religious; in his earliest childhood, and all through his childhood, there was a deep current of faith and piety running through all his thoughts and feelings, a constant recognition and sympathy in his mind with the truths and objects of religion. Those evil passions and impulses, those wavering propensities and dispositions, which in most children awaken so much parental anxiety, and demand such constant watchfulness and discipline, seem in him to have been at once subdued and controlled by the presence of the strong, decided, mature piety of a man in the heart of a little child. The record of Mr. Buckminster's childhood, always somewhat known, has just been most fully laid before us, in the memoir by his sister, Mrs. Lee; and I know of no record of childhood that authorizes us to apply with more strength and emphasis the declaration of Scripture concerning one of the prophets of old, — "He was sanctified from his youth up." The promise of his early childhood was fulfilled by his career at school and at college. Here he was a striking "example of the possible connection of the most splendid genius with the most regular and persevering industry, of a generous independence of character with a perfect respect for the governors of the College, and of a keen relish for innocent enjoyment with a

fixed dread of every shadow of vice." * He took his degree at Cambridge in 1800, a few months after his sixteenth birth-day, and thus "left the University with an unspotted fame and its highest literary honors at an age when most are entering upon collegiate duties." After leaving college, he was for two years assistant teacher in Exeter Academy,† and subsequently private tutor

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* Thacher's Memoir.

† "At this time he had the honor and privilege of being the instructor of Daniel Webster. Mr. Webster, in a manuscript memoir of his early life, says, — 'My first lessons in Latin were recited to Joseph Stevens Buckminster, at that time an assistant at the Academy. I made tolerable progress in all the branches I attended to under his instruction, but there was one thing I could not do, — I could not make a declamation, I could not speak before the school. The kind and excellent Buckminster especially sought to persuade me to perform the exercise of declamation like the other boys, but I could not do it. Many a piece did I commit to memory and rehearse in my own room, over and over again; but when the day came, when the school collected, when my name was called, and I saw all eyes turned upon my seat, I could not raise myself from it. Sometimes the masters frowned, sometimes they smiled. Mr. Buckminster always pressed and entreated, with the most winning kindness, that I would only venture *once;* but I could not command sufficient resolution, and when the occasion was over I went home and wept bitter tears of mortification.'

"What interesting thoughts does this description excite, with all the gathered associations of so many years! The youthful teacher winning the future statesman to exert that unsuspected power which has since had such wide-spread and powerful influence. Did he discern that noble intellect,

in the family of his uncle, the late Theodore Lyman, senior, pursuing, at the same time, however, his studies in theology, and preparing himself for that profession which, from his earliest years, had been the profession of his choice. His course of theological study was elaborate and thorough, though pursued chiefly under his own direction. The principle he adopted — that of beginning with what was simple and clear, and gradually proceeding to what was difficult, doubtful, or dark — was one that fostered independence and integrity of mind, and gave permanence and power to whatever opinions he adopted on deliberate conviction and thorough research. After four years of preparatory theological study, during which he went through an uncommonly wide and extensive field of theological investigation, he accepted the invitation of this society to become its pastor, and

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that exalted genius, then concealed in the bashful reserve of his pupil? The sensibility that made Webster shrink from display would have indicated to a penetrating eye the hidden power; and the persevering kindness with which the instructor urged again and again that he would only venture *once*, proves that he was conscious there was much concealed that only needed encouragement to bring out and make him know his latent power. Mr. Webster was older than Buckminster. Had the teacher been permitted to live to observe the splendid career of the pupil, with what pride would he have looked back to the moment when his youthful voice soothed and encouraged the diffidence of one afterwards so eminent!" — *Memoirs of Buckminster*, by Mrs. Lee, pp. 114, 115.

was inducted into office before the completion of his minority. Of the harmony, the prosperity, the spiritual growth and progress of the society during his ministry, it is unnecessary that I should speak. Much of the fruits of that ministry still abides among us. Continually have I witnessed them, often have I been reminded of them, in my parochial walks. But a few years ago, one who has now gone to his account, and the last years of whose life were checkered by various sore trials, said to me, in tones of mournful earnestness and sincerity, — "I received my strongest and deepest religious impressions from Mr. Buckminster. *He* was the first person who woke up my soul to a sense of the grandeur and responsibility of its destiny, and made me feel that religion was important, — had a reality. I have had many trials to bear, some sad reverses, some bitter bereavements to meet, and if I have had faith to bear them with tolerable patience and fortitude, — if I have had strength and peace and an immortal hope to cheer me, — I owe it all, under God, to him; and even to this day, Brattle Street Church is more associated with him in my mind than it is with you, or with any other preacher. Scarcely a Sunday passes, that my thoughts do not revert to him, that his image does not rise up before me at some time during the service." Others, doubtless, could make the same declara-

tion, bear the same testimony. And the ministry that left this strong and durable impress of itself upon so many hearts lasted but seven years and five months, — the name that is among the most illustrious in the American pulpit belonged to a young man who died before he reached the age at which most eminent men are just beginning to be known. Many years ago, when I was a student in theology myself, I remember asking a contemporary and friend of Mr. Buckminster, — a brother of the same profession, one who knew him well and loved him much, — what was the secret of his success, — of his power. To which he replied, "Have you ever read his sermons?" I answered, "Yes, and I admit them to be excellent, admirable, very striking, impressive sermons; but they do not seem to me to explain and account for all the enthusiasm with which you and those who knew him speak of him, — the deep reverence and affection with which you all cherish his name and memory." At this distance of time, I cannot recall his precise words, but the substance of what he said at some length, in reply, was as follows: — "To judge of Mr. Buckminster's sermons and properly appreciate them, one must review the preaching of the thirty or forty years previous, and make himself familiar with its general characteristics, both as to the topics selected and mode and style of treatment. He

will perceive that, with a few exceptions, the preaching of that period was dry, technical, formal. It was the anatomy of the bones of religion, exhibited in a carefully prepared, but lifeless, skeleton. Mr. Buckminster introduced the living form into the pulpit in all its beauty, freshness, and strength, and showed its practical uses and power. Let any one read a dozen of the ordinary sermons of that period, and then read Mr. Buckminster, and he will get some idea of the life and freshness and reality which he imparted to the services of the pulpit, and will not be surprised at the impression his preaching produced, — especially when he takes into the account the felicity of his manner, the glory of his speaking eye, and the rich pathos of his voice. He will understand how it was, and why it was, that the most refined and least cultivated equally hung upon his lips, and that all classes, the young, the mature, the aged, listened with wonder and delight, — were at once charmed, instructed, and improved."

"Still," he continued, "I am not surprised at your question. It has often been asked me; and I admit, that Mr. Buckminster's sermons alone do not explain to those who never knew him the impression he made upon the community, and the enthusiastic reverence and affection cherished for him by his friends. This is to be explained by the singular beauty and harmony of his

character, and the extraordinary combination of qualities which he possessed. We have had men of genius and men of industry in the pulpit before his day, — men who were eloquent and impressive as preachers, and men who were distinguished for large and extensive learning, — men of enthusiasm and fervor, and men of prudence, caution, and good practical judgment, — men bold and independent in their speculations, and men desirous not to give offence, wise and careful in the changes of thought and opinion they endeavored to introduce, — men of dignity and sternness, and men of gentleness and sweetness of disposition, — men distinguished for one or other of these qualities ; Mr. Buckminster was remarkable for them all. In him they were singularly combined and harmonized. He was a man of genius, that is, of extraordinary natural gifts and powers ; but he united with them the most patient and untiring industry. He was a man of marvellous eloquence as a speaker and writer, yet he was as remarkable, — he was more remarkable, considering his age, for his learning, his profound and accurate theological and general scholarship, than for his eloquence ; and the impetus and direction he gave to learning, especially to theological investigation, was not less than that which he gave to religion in its practical departments of piety and virtue. He was a man of enthusiasm, fervent and zealous ;

yet none of his age and time surpassed him in profound, practical wisdom, good sense, and good judgment. He had a bold and independent mind, controlled supremely in its investigation only by a love and reverence for truth ; and yet with such a respect for the prejudices or errors of others, that he never wounded them unnecessarily or purposely. In the dignity and firmness of his character, religion in its highest claims was never compromised by unworthy compliances with fashionable follies or popular sins ; while the sweetness of his manners, the instinctive gentleness and kindness of his disposition, won for himself and the religion he preached interest, affection, and respect from all. It was this harmonious combination of extraordinary gifts and qualities that caused Mr. Buckminster to be loved, honored, reverenced ; this explains his success, the influence he exerted, and the fond regret and enduring remembrance with which his name is still cherished."

This, I suppose, is the true explanation to be given of Mr. Buckminster's character and influence. It is confirmed by all that we know of his life and labors, while pastor of this church. While he failed in no duty here, and made this pulpit and the sphere of action immediately connected with it always the first and the most important object of his efforts, his heart took in all the great interests of the community, and no man did more to

promote them. In all the movements of his day for the advancement of science, literature, education, philanthropy, he took a prominent part, and of all the societies or institutions formed or existing for the promotion of these objects, he was an active officer or an efficient member.

In the autumn of 1811, he received the appointment of Lecturer on the Literature and Criticism of the Sacred Scriptures, on the foundation established by the late Hon. Samuel Dexter, his friend and parishioner. Of this appointment he was every way worthy, and it gave entire satisfaction to the public. For its duties, which were to be discharged without relinquishing his parish, he was every way qualified. But he thought otherwise. His honorable ambition, his conscientiousness, his profound sense of the importance and responsibleness of these duties, urged him beyond his strength. He passed the winter of 1812 in the most zealous and indefatigable study, preparing for his lectures, — rising two hours earlier every morning for this purpose, — at the same time relaxing none of his labors for his pulpit, some of the most eloquent and excellent of his sermons having been written at this period. To one so frail, already subject to a fearful malady, the result of such intense intellectual action and effort was what was dreaded by some, and might have been foreseen by all.

The excitement of the anniversary week of 1812, — at which time he preached the last sermon he ever wrote, before the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, Piety, and Charity, — succeeded, as it was, by the warm and relaxing weather of early June, was too much for him, and overstrained nature gave way. On Wednesday, the 3d of that month, he was seized with a most violent attack of his disorder, which completely prostrated his reason, and made a total wreck of his once glorious intellect. But his fervent prayer, offered in all submission, was granted, — he did not outlive his faculties and his usefulness. "The ruin came all at once; the shock was instantaneous." He was struck down in the very height of his fame and of his power, for it is said that "he never appeared more brilliant, more equal to every duty, more animated and efficient, than immediately before his last illness."* The struggle between life and death lasted for one week, when he expired, on Tuesday, the 9th of June. The funeral sermon was preached by Dr. Kirkland, and his remains, amid the tears and fond regrets of many hearts, were deposited in the tomb of his uncle, the late Theodore Lyman, at Waltham. Here they remained for thirty years. On the 12th of June, 1842, they were removed,

* Thacher's Memoir.

and deposited in a beautiful spot at Mount Auburn, with appropriate services which you all remember, and a chaste monument erected over them, by the subscriptions of his friends and former parishioners.* There, in the beautiful spot

* This was an occasion of much interest both to the members of the Brattle Street society and to the friends of Mr. Buckminster generally, who assembled at Mount Auburn on the afternoon of June 12th, 1842, where the remains were then deposited with appropriate services, which were conducted by Dr. Palfrey. From a brief memorandum made at the time, the following sketch of Dr. Palfrey's remarks has been prepared: —

"Dr. Palfrey said, that, since the form which lay before them had moved in the scenes of life, thirty years had come and gone, — a whole generation had passed across the stage. But many were present who remembered it well when it was animated by the sainted spirit of Buckminster, — and many others who know what a space he filled in the view of his own time, and what an influence has descended from him upon the times which have followed. And they think their duty undischarged till his mortal remains have been placed where the step of affection and gratitude may in all coming time visit their resting-place.

"The time for eulogy, Dr. P. said, had gone by, and the time for sorrow; but it might not be inappropriate to the occasion to recall a few facts. He referred briefly to the parentage of Mr. Buckminster, to the bright promise of his childhood, to his pure and studious youth; and said that in the beautiful example of his college life his mission of usefulness was already in part accomplished. The earnestness, diligence, and candor of his theological studies for four years, and the peculiar circumstances under which they were prosecuted, involving an abandonment of opinions in which he had been educated, were next noticed; the state of the

where his remains now rest, we may hope that, for long years and for many generations, his

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churches and the character of pulpit services at the time of his entrance upon them; the interest and admiration excited by his preaching; his settlement in the church in Brattle Square; the injury sustained by his health in consequence of the assiduity of his devotion to his work; his absence in Europe, and return; his growth in learning, graces, and influence; and his services to literary and other public objects, — among others, his contributions to the Anthology, his agency in the foundation of the Athenæum, and his zeal and activity as an Overseer of the College.

"The singular excellence and efficacy of his private social influence was then dwelt upon. There was a fascination in his presence altogether peculiar; — in his person, his voice, the expression of his countenance, his manners, his conversation. All who approached felt attracted to him. All desired his friendship, and all felt that to be worthy of it they must be good and useful. They who would sympathize with him had to sympathize with all excellent aims and objects. And especially, his elegant attainments, and his enthusiastic love of letters, — communicated to the admiring youth around him, and through them to a now wide circle, — were represented as being, more than any thing else, the remote cause of the rapid progress of learning in New England since his day, and its improved state in the present times.

"Some of the circumstances of the sudden access of his disease on Wednesday, the 3d of June, and of its progress to the fatal event, were related. Dr. P. said he well remembered how the tolling of the bell from the church-tower, announcing his departure, seemed to throw the city into a universal mourning; he remembered the weeping crowds in the church, and the sobs from manly bosoms, and tears streaming down manly cheeks, among the groups that stood

name, written in marble, shall speak to the conscience and the heart; and to all who love learning, piety, and virtue, be an incentive to fidelity

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under a stormy sky around the grave in the Chapel burying-ground, where the body was first deposited. It was presently conveyed to the tomb of the late Theodore Lyman in Waltham, whence it was now reclaimed to be committed to its final rest.

"We have chosen that place of rest, said Dr. P., where we think that our friend and benefactor might have desired to lie. Only a few years will pass, and the silent preacher will be surrounded here by a silent congregation. It will be of those who have loved him, and whom he has loved. There will be those whom, on the morning of the resurrection, his loving spirit will joy to clasp in a reunion never then to be dissolved. There will be those once accustomed to hang on his eloquent lips, and for whom he kindled or quickened that hope full of immortality which to this day glows in their bosoms, and irradiates their lives. We mean that, though dead, he shall yet speak once more. We mean to break the silence of those mute lips. We mean that the mound which is to be heaped on that open grave shall bear a tablet consecrated to profitable memories. Might it be that the glorified spirit, descending from the abodes of bliss, should now be hovering over us, we trust that, witnessing such a purpose in us, — a purpose not merely of satisfying feelings natural and cherished, but of extending the beneficent influence we rejoice in, — our affectionate tribute might not be viewed as worthless. We trust that God himself — the Source of all good influences, the Giver of every good and perfect gift — may not disdain our endeavor thus to perpetuate and promote the influence which he himself ordained to go forth from his selected servant."

The inscription on the monument is as follows: —

in duty. God grant this review of his life and ministry may be so to us!

Brattle Street, May 12th, 1850.

JOSEPH STEVENS BUCKMINSTER
was born
May 26, 1784,
was ordained pastor
of the Church in
Brattle Square, Boston,
January 30, 1805,
and departed this life
June 9, 1812.

His mortal remains
with those of
his eldest sister
were deposited beneath
this stone,
by the care of the Church
to which he
had ministered,
June 12, 1842.

SERMON VI.

THE LORD OUR GOD BE WITH US, AS HE WAS WITH OUR FATHERS: LET HIM NOT LEAVE US, NOR FORSAKE US. — 1 Kings viii. 57.

In successive sermons, we have now followed the history of this church from its establishment in 1699 to the close of Mr. Buckminster's ministry, in June, 1812. This brings us to a period distinctly within the memory of very many who hear me. Mr. Buckminster was succeeded by Mr. Everett; and his very brief and brilliant ministry was followed by the longer and eminently faithful, devoted, and useful ministry of Dr. Palfrey. Propriety does not permit us to speak of the living with the same freedom with which we speak of the dead; but as long years have passed since these gentlemen were incumbents of this pulpit, and as both have since been eminent in various and widely different walks of life, it would seem, that, without any violation

of propriety, we might speak with considerable frankness and freedom of their services and influence in this desk. I shall hope not to be guilty of such violation, and yet shall endeavor to give you some just account of their ministries.

After the death of Mr. Buckminster, the pulpit was supplied for more than a year by temporary engagements with various clergymen, no one of whom preached as a candidate. Early in the autumn of 1813, the attention of the parish was directed to Mr. Everett, who had graduated at Harvard College two years before, with the highest honors of his class, and an unsurpassed reputation for talents and scholarship, and who was at this time pursuing his theological studies at Cambridge. He was invited to preach as a candidate on the 10th of December, 1813, and, after supplying the pulpit four Sundays, received a unanimous invitation to become the pastor of the society. The invitation was accepted, and he was ordained on the 9th of February, 1814. Mr. Everett's ministry lasted but thirteen months. Early in the year 1815, he accepted the appointment tendered him by the Corporation of Harvard College, of Eliot Professor of Greek Literature, and his connection with this society was dissolved on the 5th of March of that year. Never did a severer blow fall more unexpectedly upon a parish than this ; never was a dissolution of a pas-

toral connection more reluctantly acquiesced in. I make no undue claim for the clerical profession; but I am not disposed to admit that there is any higher stand-point for human effort than the desk of religious instruction, — any sphere in which learning, talent, genius, all the energies of a noble mind and a generous heart, can do more good, exert a wider, more lasting, more important influence, than in the pulpit, especially the free Congregational pulpit of America; and it must always be matter of regret when a person having these rich gifts and endowments steps aside and steps down from the pulpit to mingle in the dust and strife of secular affairs. In the case of Mr. Everett, however, the regret felt, and which some, who distinctly remember him thirty-seven years ago as the youthful pastor of this church, feel strongly to this day, — the regret that talents so eminent should have been thus early lost to the pulpit, — is somewhat mitigated by the fact, that in every sphere in which they have since been exerted, in every office which they have since honored and adorned, — in the halls of legislation, in the higher walks of diplomacy, in academic retreats, and the various paths of learning and science, — they have been crowned with eminent success and eminent usefulness, have ever been exerted on the side of religion, virtue, truth, — truth in the broad, full meaning of the word.

Yet, eminent, honored, and useful as Mr. Everett has been and is, it may be, — a wise prophet might almost venture the prediction, — it may be that he will go down to posterity as connected with the religious rather than the secular history of the country. It may be that, when all else that he has done shall have been forgotten, — its interest passed away in the temporary interest which produced it, — he will be remembered and his name most frequently mentioned and quoted in connection with his "Defence of Christianity," — a work written before he reached his majority, and published within a few months after his ordination in this desk. This work, presenting, as it does, a very able argument in support of the prophecies of the Old Testament, and their bearing upon the truth and divine origin of the Christian religion, was regarded at the time, and may still be considered, as one of the most original and most important theological works that had then been written in America. It was called forth by the state of the times, and completely met the wants of the times. Sceptical tendencies in a portion of this community were at that period strongly manifested, and infidel opinions were openly announced and advocated by some. Particularly, Mr. G. B. English, then recently returned from Europe, had attacked Christianity through the Old Testament, particularly through

the prophecies. His work, eagerly and extensively read, had unsettled the faith of many, and, if unanswered, was calculated to do much injury. I have been told that some attempts to answer it in the preaching of that day were not eminently successful.* However this may be, Mr. Everett's work was a triumphant answer and a complete vindication. It produced immediately a strong and marked impression upon the public mind. Though written to meet a temporary exigency, it is a work of thorough learning and of real, permanent value. Indeed, when we consider all the circumstances under which it was written, the extreme youth of the author, the brief period in which it was prepared, the mass of learning it brings together well digested and arranged, the closeness of its reasoning in some passages, the glow and fervor of its eloquence in others, and the effect it produced, it must be acknowledged one of the most extraordinary books in the annals of American religious literature. It is a rare book now, and but little known to the younger generations. Many who hear me, probably, were wholly ignorant of the fact that Mr. Everett had ever written such a work. I have heard that application was made to him a

* I have heard the late Dr. Pierce, President Kirkland, and Dr. Porter of Roxbury, make this remark.

few years ago for permission to publish a new edition, and that the application was not successful, because his health and engagements would not admit of his giving the work that thorough revision which the publication of a new edition might require. This is to be regretted; for, without any disparagement of the good he has done and the honors he has attained in other departments, I cannot but think that, if there is any one event of his life, any one work or labor, of which, on a just estimate of things, he may well be most proud, it is that at the age of twenty he wrote and published his "Defence of Christianity,"—a book which silenced the voice of infidelity, and gave peace, satisfaction, and a firm faith to thousands of minds in a young and growing community.

While pastor of this church, Mr. Everett made but one other publication under his own name; viz. a sermon preached at the funeral of the Rev. Mr. Abbot, the predecessor of Dr. Frothingham, at the First Church. I have always understood from those whose memories reach back to that period, that he was faithful and devoted to his work while in this desk, and the records, showing fourteen additions to the church, and thirty-six baptisms, during his very brief ministry, are an evidence that the ordinances of religion did not languish under his administration.

After his resignation, the pulpit was vacant more than three years. During this period, several persons preached as candidates, and various attempts were made to settle a minister, but without success. In March, 1818, Mr. John Gorham Palfrey was invited to supply the desk for four Sundays as a candidate. At the close of his engagement, at a meeting held on the 26th of April following, he was unanimously invited to become the pastor and teacher of the flock. The invitation was accepted, and he was ordained on the 17th of June, 1818. Dr. Palfrey's peaceful, prosperous, devoted, and faithful ministry is too distinctly remembered by most of those who hear me to need much comment. He brought to the profession a mind most thoroughly disciplined by early and systematic culture, well stored with professional and general learning, trained to habits of patient and persevering industry, imbued with a devout and earnest interest in the great objects of his profession. Through these qualities all his ministry was marked by thoroughness, method, and fidelity in every department. Externally, the most important event in the concerns of the parish during his connection with it was a thorough and extensive repair of the church and of the parsonage-house, made in 1824. In the spring of that year, the porch on the south side of the church was removed by order of the city

government, and the entrance to the galleries and lower floor of the church in that direction closed. This made it necessary to construct a new entrance to the south gallery, and for this purpose wings of twenty feet were added each side of the front porch, thus making an ample vestibule, and direct entrances in front to the galleries, and to the side aisles of the lower floor. This was a great improvement, giving a uniformity to the church which it wanted before. It was at this time newly painted throughout, and carpeted. This repair of the church, together with its then favorable location in regard to population and the residences of the citizens, and the eminently faithful and acceptable services of Dr. Palfrey, conspired to make the period of his ministry one of great temporal and spiritual prosperity. The ordinances of religion were well attended, and a Sunday school was established, and conducted with systematic thoroughness and ability. An association for benevolent and missionary purposes was formed, through which much good was done, and a door opened for the religious activity of the society. It should be remembered, also, that the period of Dr. Palfrey's ministry was a period of strong religious interest and effort throughout the city and State. It was a period of deep and thorough religious discussion, when the questions at issue between the Liberal and

Orthodox portions of the Congregational body strongly agitated the public mind, and no one could well refrain from some interest in them.

There has been no period, probably, since the commencement of the present century, when the ministry was so agreeable and so useful, when the religious institutions of the country were so prosperous and progressive, and religion itself held so much of its rightful place and sway in men's thoughts and interests, as during the twelve years that intervened between 1818 and 1830. It was a period of political quiet comparatively,—"the era of good feelings," as the old politicians remember and call it. The contention of parties nearly ceased for several years. There was little of that political strife and struggle and agitation that existed during the Embargo and the war, or that have prevailed since 1830. Politics did not absorb and engross men's minds, embitter their feelings, and drive religion from their thoughts and its influence from their lives, to the extent they did before, or have done since. It was a period of peace, and of a gradual, healthy, commercial prosperity. There were no widespread commercial embarrassments to distract and harass men's minds, like those which occurred during the first fifteen years of the present century, and none of those gigantic enterprises, and none of that rapid, lightning-like advancement and

accumulation of wealth, consequent upon railroads, which have since occurred, to seduce and ensnare and render unspiritual and worldly the public mind. Religion, meeting with no drawbacks in the troubles and disasters of society, and having little to contend with in its too great prosperity and progress, more easily held its place, and exerted more of its rightful sway as the controlling power in society, than it does now. Religion, in its administration and influence, was aided outwardly by the circumstances of the times. This aid would have availed nothing without fidelity and devotedness in the ministry. Meeting with this fidelity and devotedness in Dr. Palfrey, the outward favorable circumstances tended to make his ministry eminently prosperous in things temporal and spiritual. That ministry lasted twelve years. In 1830, he was chosen to succeed Mr. Norton as Dexter Professor of Sacred Literature in Harvard College, and his connection with the parish was dissolved in February of the following year. He carried with him to his new field of duty as large a share of regret, confidence, affection, and respect, as ever minister bore from the society he had left.

After his dismission, the pulpit was vacant four years, a longer vacancy than had ever before occurred since the establishment of the church. Once during this period, after several ineffectual

attempts to unite upon a candidate, Dr. Palfrey was invited to resume the pastoral charge of the parish; but he declined the invitation, and continued at his post at Cambridge from the same considerations of duty which led him to accept it.*

In April, 1834, the present incumbent was invited to become the pastor, and was inducted into office on the 18th of June of that year. His ministry is now approaching the completion of its seventeenth year, and is longer by several years than either of the three immediately preceding it. Of what has occurred during it, it is not necessary to speak with much detail. Some external changes have been made. Soon after the settlement of the present pastor, the vestry was enlarged; or rather, the two vestry-rooms in each

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* During his ministry, Dr. Palfrey was for a time editor of the Christian Examiner, and also published several occasional sermons. After leaving the pastoral charge of the society in Brattle Square, he made three very valuable additions to the theological literature of the country, viz.:—A volume of sermons "On Duties belonging to some of the Conditions and Relations of Private Life," published in 1834. "Academical Lectures on the Jewish Scriptures and Antiquities," a work to be comprised in four volumes, two of which have been published for some time, and the remaining two are in press, and will shortly be issued. This is a work of great learning and research, although some of its opinions upon the prophecies have not been received with entire approbation by the public. Two volumes of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity, delivered before the Lowell Institute, and published in 1843.

wing of the porch were thrown into one, by removing a portion of the side-walls of the tower, and thus a commodious room was obtained for the use of the Sunday school and other purposes. Previous to that, the Sunday school was held in the body of the church. At the same time, the north gallery was remodelled, the square pews changed into slips, and thus made to conform to the north gallery.

In 1835, on the report of a committee of the church, raised at the suggestion of the pastor, important changes were made in the covenant used in admitting persons to the communion-table, the baptismal or half-way covenant dispensed with, and the pastor authorized to administer baptism to children of all parents who desired it, whether members of the church or not, upon such Christian acknowledgments as he should deem sufficient. The attention of the church was called to this subject by the pastor, because no evidence was furnished by the records that the church had ever adopted or agreed upon any covenant or form of admission to the communion. The Manifesto put forth by the undertakers could hardly be regarded in that light, and was never used, probably, for that purpose. It was simply a general declaration of the principles upon which the society was established, and the general views of Christian truth which its members entertained,

but was not intended to be a church-covenant or creed. Under date of December 12th, 1699, Dr. Colman writes, "After solemn calling upon God, the following brethren declared their consent and agreement to walk together in the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ." And this is all that the records contain in relation to any covenant or form of admission to the communion. Probably there was at some time some action of the church upon the subject, but no record is made of it. In the small pulpit Bible were two covenants, one for admission to the church, and the other for the administration of baptism to the children of non-communicants. But when, or by whom, or by whose authority, these covenants were introduced, could not be ascertained. Their use reached back beyond the memory of the oldest members of the society, but no reference to them could be found in the records.

It was under these circumstances, that, in 1835, as stated above, the matter was brought before the consideration of the church. The covenant adopted on the report of the committee above mentioned, and now in use, was mainly the covenant still to be found in the small pulpit Bible. With the exception of abridging its length, the most important change made was the introduction of a clause, found, I believe, in the covenants of several of the earliest Congregational churches of New Eng-

land, to the following purport: — "You promise to yield obedience to every truth of God that *has been* or *shall be* made known to *you* as *your* duty, the Lord assisting you by his spirit and grace." This clause secures individual liberty, and embraces the idea of change, progress, advancement in the knowledge of divine things, of truth, and duty. It is, therefore, a most important clause in our covenant, truly Christian in its spirit and character, requiring no other and no further surrender of individual freedom and independence than that a person be strictly conscientious, obedient to his honest and sincere convictions of truth and duty. Through this clause many have been brought to the Lord's table, to enjoy all the benefits and hallowed influences of that holy rite of commemoration, who would otherwise have been restrained through fear of too large a surrender of individual liberty and independence.

In the outward administration of our affairs, these are the principal changes that have been made since the commencement of the present ministry. During this period, the society has been harmonious, and as prosperous as was to be expected, perhaps, under the great and rapid changes which have taken place in this city during the last sixteen years, — changes greater, more rapid, and affecting to a greater extent the relative position of this church, than any which have

occurred during the whole of the one hundred and thirty-four previous years of its existence.

With some minuteness of detail in portions of it, I have now laid before you the history of this venerable church and society, from its first inception. And as we close the retrospect, what is the great thought that rushes to our minds and leaps for utterance to our lips? Is it not all expressed in that supplication of Solomon breathed at the dedication of the temple? — "The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers. Let him not leave us, nor forsake us." Signally was the Lord God with our fathers. Rich are the tokens of Divine favor which from the beginning have rested upon this religious society. It has been a church of peace. For one hundred and fifty years, its harmony has never been essentially disturbed. No discussions have occurred sufficient to obstruct its prosperity or invade its quiet, — a fact, I believe, which cannot be so strongly asserted of any other of the churches of our city that have been established a century and a half. Here, notwithstanding there have been occasionally differences of opinion, brotherly love has continued, and mutual forbearance and charity made it a church of peace, — and of peace, because of liberty. It has been a church faithful to the great Protestant principles of Christian liberty. Our fathers were not disorganizers or

radicals. In things spiritual, they reverenced the authority of Christ and his Gospel, but would bow to no other authority. They were noble and independent men, men of a lofty piety and a holy zeal, who, in the calm confidence of a good cause, scrupled not, amid obloquy and opposition, to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free, and all succeeding generations have had the benefit of their steadfastness. The three wise, just, but at the time obnoxious principles which they introduced have now become all but universally prevalent in the Congregational churches of New England.

And because of its liberty, it has been an enlightened and progressive church. Restraints, legal or conventional, barring the avenues of religious truth to the mind, — these are the things that produce violent changes of religious opinion and make them necessary. Here these restraints have never existed, have never been imposed This church has known no law but liberty, no object but truth. Its ministers have ever been free to ascertain it in their studies, free to utter it in their preaching as their consciences and judgments might dictate. Consequently, all changes that have taken place here in the religious opinions of the ministers, and of the general body of worshippers, have come on gradually, have been the natural growth of the religious freedom here enjoyed.

It was my purpose to unfold some of these changes, and the causes which operated to produce them. But I find this no easy task. It is a matter involved in some obscurity. The ecclesiastical history of New England, especially of Massachusetts, as respects changes of religious opinion, is yet to be written. It is thoroughly embraced and treated in no one work. Its materials are to be searched for and gathered from an immense mass of occasional sermons, tracts, and pamphlets of various kinds. Its great outline of independent Congregationalism is distinct and clear, but within that outline much of the picture is vague and indistinct, — the lights and shadows blending so gradually into each other as to give bold and strong prominence to but few points. Thus is it also in the history of this church, as respects the religious opinions of the ministers or worshippers. At the beginning, in its Manifesto, it defined very distinctly its position. So far as that instrument is a declaration of the principles to be here observed in the administration of the Gospel as a religious institution, there has always been a strict adherence to it. In this respect, the Manifesto is still the law of the society. So far as it is a declaration of theological doctrine, there has been on some points a gradual departure from it. No violent changes, however, have occurred. The Manifesto, even so far as it is a recognition

of theological doctrine, has never been formally revoked, and no action has been had, either by the church or the society, defining and setting forth its theological tenets, or assuming any new denominational name, or any name other than that which it assumed at first, and has always held, derived from its locality, — the Church in Brattle Street. Its ministers have all been independent Congregationalists, and zealous supporters and defenders of that form of church organization, and under all the various shades of opinion which they have held and preached, this church has always had that liberal, "catholic air" which Colman says he "breathed in at Cambridge." *

* Dr. Thacher, in the memoir of him to which reference has already been made, is said to have been in early life somewhat narrow and bigoted, and, in his preaching, sometimes harsh and denunciatory towards those who differed from the orthodox standard of faith. He very early, however, outgrew this temper, and was distinguished for his large charity and his catholic spirit. Mr. William Cooper was more strict and stern in his Calvinism than any other of the early ministers of this church; yet there was much that was generous and catholic in his spirit. He was disposed to recognize and maintain the true Gospel liberty both of the church and of the individual Christian, and was severe and denunciatory, not so much against religious error as against religious indifference and sin. In his Confession of Faith, published in connection with Dr. Colman's sermon at his ordination, he says of the books of the Old and New Testament, — "*These* I *believe* to be of divine *original* and *authority*. *These* I would make the fountain from whence to draw all my knowledge, the touch-

In most periods of its history, it has been a church distinguished for zeal, piety, and charity. Here, in all times, the Christian ordinances have been largely observed. It was a well-founded declaration of Dr. Thacher, that "he did not know an unbaptized child among the families of

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stone to which to bring every *doctrine;* and whatever does not agree hereunto I will reject, as not having the *light* of *truth* in it. . . . . I *believe* that Christ is the *alone King and Head of his Church*, and that none else has power over our faith or dominion over our consciences."

The following passage from that part of the Confession in which he presents the "rules and methods of conduct" by which, as a Christian minister, he hoped "in some measure to reach unto the great and worthy ends proposed," gives such a favorable impression of the man that I insert it.

"I am sensible that the *minister* implies the *Christian*, and that the good effects of my ministry upon others does in a great measure depend upon the holiness of my own heart and life: I would therefore *take heed to myself* and *keep my own vineyard;* and first seek after an experience of the work of Grace in my own soul and to exhibit the power of it in my own life. The word of God I would make the rule of my whole behavior and conversation, that so I may be *an example to the believers, in word, in conversation, in faith, in love, in humility, in purity, in gravity,* and may give no offence in any thing, that *the ministry be not blamed.*

"As a *minister,* I shall endeavor to perform all ministerial duties and labors both public and private. I am sensible (God make me more so!) of my own deficiency in *Knowledge*, as well as *Grace:* I therefore purpose to give myself to reading, meditation, prayer, and diligent study, especially of the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make *the man of God* thoroughly furnished. The *truths* of the Gospel I will en-

his charge." The table of communion, though formerly, as now, neglected by many, has always witnessed a good attendance, and at some periods a full and large one.*

It has been a church of philanthropy and beneficence. Early in its history, we find that, at the

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deavor faithfully to dispense, and not keep back any part of the counsel of God.

"The *laws* of the Gospel I will inculcate and enforce. Against *sin* in every instance of it I will faithfully witness. To every particular person I will, as I am able, give their portion in due season.

"The worship and institutions of Christ I shall endeavor to observe in the purity of them, according to his holy word, and to maintain and exercise that holy discipline which he has instituted in his Church, without partiality.

"But concerning what I shall do, if trouble and persecution should arise because of the word, I would be very jealous over myself; yet I trust that, through *the Power of Christ resting upon me*, I shall be enabled to suffer for the *Truth*, yea, to seal it with my blood, rather than betray it.

"To move and quicken me to all which, I shall endeavor to affect myself with the worth of immortal souls, and the danger of my own; to get and preserve an awful sense of the bonds of God upon me, and the strictness of that account which I must shortly give up to the *chief Shepherd at his appearing*.

"These purposes and resolutions I would make in an humble reliance on the grace of God, in a sense of my own insufficiency; asking the prayers of ministers and people of God for me, that I may find mercy and grace to be faithful herein unto the death."

* During one period of twenty-seven years, there were six hundred and sixty-six additions to the church, an average of at least two at every administration of the communion.

suggestion of its first pastor, it voted to take up a collection twice in each year, to form an "Evangelical Treasury for the propagation of religion and piety, and to be held sacred to such uses." The sums thus obtained were expended in efforts to diffuse the knowledge and influence of the Gospel through "the dispersing Bibles, catechisms, and other instruments of piety among the poor." In every generation, its members have acknowledged the obligations of Christian benevolence, and been ready to give, and give largely, of their means for the relief of the poor and for the advancement of the cause of Christ. I know not that a worthy object or enterprise of charity has ever sought the aid of this church, and been refused.

Such, briefly stated, have been some of the characteristics of this church. Thus has the Lord our God been with it in times past, enriching it with the gifts and graces of his spirit. Thus has it come into our hands,—been given in charge to our fidelity; and a long array of venerable and holy men will rise up in judgment against us, if we prove faithless to that charge. Under any circumstances, it is a responsible and weighty charge. Of all the interests that come down to us from our predecessors, religion, its institutions and influences, are the most important; and in our case, the history of our church, and all the

associations that gather around it, make an appeal to our honor and conscience which ought not to be unheeded. The interests of this religious society, its prosperity and permanence, its healthy condition and influences, now devolve upon us. We occupy the places, enjoy the privileges, and hold the power, that once belonged to others.

There are strong reasons moving some of us to feel a deep interest in the prosperity of this church. We have been long connected with it. Much of the joy and sorrow of our lives is associated with it. It is, and has been, the scene of our deepest religious experiences. Holy and hallowed memories gather around it in our thoughts. With some of us, the recollections of early childhood cluster thick and fast about it. In unconscious infancy we were baptized at this altar. Hither the hand of parental faith and affection led our early steps to the worship of God, and through all the years of life the path has since been familiar to our feet, though the parents and brethren and sisters with whom we took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company, now sleep in dust. And where recollection goes not back to early childhood, it reaches with many to the dawn of early manhood, to those days when, stepping on the stage of active life, we rested here the ark of our faith, made this the tabernacle of our worship,

sought here the instructions that were to guide and the influences that were to protect us through the duties and perils of the world. Amid all these duties and perils, in the hour of our prosperity and in the hour of our sorrow, when our hearts have been full of gladness or heavy with grief, hither we have come with the homage of our gratitude and submission, with the supplications of our necessity, and found an answer of peace to our prayers; and if ever the chances and changes of life have carried us long and far from home, this church has risen up to our memories as the home of our holiest hopes, and we have been ready to exclaim, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning."

And where there are not these strong reasons, founded on pleasant memories and attachments that are the growth of years, there are other considerations that enforce the duty of all of us to feel an interest in the prosperity of this society, and strive to promote it. We occupy seats here. We unite here in the public worship of God. This is the religious society with which for the time being we are connected; and such a connection, wherever it exists, and so long as it exists, involves duties and responsibilities that should not be neglected. It is a benefit to religion and a blessing to the community to have its religious societies prosperous, — peace, piety,

and zeal pervading and animating them. It is every one's duty to aid in promoting this prosperity; and this general duty can be best performed, this aid can be most effectually rendered, by any one in the religious society with which he is connected, by his doing *there*, without exclusiveness, bigotry, or uncharitableness, what he can, and all that he can, to make that society prosperous in things temporal and spiritual, — a true and living church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is our duty, then, — a duty to which strong attachments and hallowed memories prompt many of us, — it is every one's duty who statedly worships at this church, — to feel an interest in its prosperity, and to do what he can to promote it. I would not imply that there is any special lack of this interest, or neglect of this duty. But we all need to be reminded of what we know, to be encouraged in what we are endeavoring to perform. In closing these discourses, therefore, suffer me to say, —

First, that we shall promote the prosperity of this church by cleaving to those principles of liberty and order which were recognized in its origin, and have ever been regarded in the conduct of its temporal affairs, and in its administration of the Gospel of Christ.

These principles are worthy of support and adherence. Indeed, the independent Congrega-

tionalism of New England should command our respect and attachment, as a form of church organization and religious administration in harmony with the spirit and genius of the Gospel, closely resembling the organization of the primitive Apostolic churches, and eminently adapted to promote civil and religious liberty, the development of individual character, and the progress of society. The principles upon which Christianity is administered in any community are of more importance than the particular doctrines that are taught or believed. Upon the great themes of God, Christ, man, upon the great questions of the trinity, the atonement, human depravity, regeneration, the influence of the Holy Spirit, in short, upon all the important points coming strictly within the department of theology, a majority of the Congregational Churches have held, and still hold, essentially the same opinions that are held by the Catholic Church. The difference, always manifest, between a Catholic and a Congregational community, the difference, for example, between Congregational New England and Catholic Mexico, and the influence of religion as an element of social progress in the one country and the other, is to be mainly attributed, not to any difference in strictly theological doctrine, but to the difference in the organization of the two churches, and the spirit and principles upon which the religion of

the Gospel is administered by each. It is the tendency of Congregationalism to enlarge and liberalize the mind, to give it freedom and scope, to impart energy, activity, enterprise, to character, to make a man feel that he is not the slave of the Church, but a member of it, with a right to have his own opinions and to express them freely, — to derive them from the Bible through his own reading and interpretation of it, and to prove and defend them by it against all that the Church and the world may oppose. The spirit of Congregationalism breathed into an individual gives him dignity, elevation, energy of character; breathed into a community, it gives a mental independence, freedom, and activity, produces an application of religion, direct and indirect, to the intellectual, moral, and physical progress of society, which cannot exist where the individual has little power to think and act for himself in religious matters, where the Bible may not be read and interpreted, save as the Church decides, and where the authority of the Church is made to absorb or overshadow the essential substance of religion.

That Congregationalism is exempt from all imperfection, no one would contend. No form of civil or religious organization to be administered by human wisdom is thus exempt. In all things in this world, the tares and the wheat grow together. But the evils, the imperfections, that

attach to Congregationalism, are not to be named with those that come in the train of spiritual despotism. The intellectual, moral, and religious condition of New England, its various institutions of learning, science, and philanthropy, the general spirit and character of its people, are mainly the result of the form in which religion has been administered within its borders, and this form has been predominantly Congregational. We are willing to point to them, we have a right to point to them, as evidence and illustration of the efficacy and value of this form of ecclesiastical organization.

Would we promote the prosperity of this church, let us cleave manfully and firmly to those great Congregational principles upon which it was founded, and of which clear and distinct declarations were made in its Manifesto;* let

* While these sheets have been passing through the press, I found, in an old volume of miscellaneous pamphlets in the Boston Athenæum, a copy of the "Manifesto" as originally printed, which is curious for two reasons. Written upon it, in a bold, legible hand, is the name of "Benjamin Walker," who was one of the "undertakers," and is mentioned in the deed conveying the land on which the church now stands. This copy undoubtedly belonged to him. Upon the blank page of the "Manifesto," in the same handwriting with the name above mentioned, are the following memoranda: —

"*December 8th*, 1799.

"*Voted*, For the explanation of the 7th article, it is intended that the renewal of the baptismal covenant required

our hearts cherish an attachment to them; let our influence go to sustain them.

Having confirmed our confidence and increased our interest in the form of church organization and the mode of administering religion here established, we may promote the prosperity of this society, —

Secondly, by a faithful and punctual attendance upon its services. We cannot expect the society to be prosperous so long as we fail in this duty; and to whatever extent we neglect it, to that extent our influence goes to impede its prosperity, to dishearten its minister, to extinguish the fire upon its altar, and to impart our own coldness and indifference to others. Punctual attendance upon the church where he claims to be a wor-

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therein shall be in public, before their admission to the Lord's table.

"*Voted*, For the explanation of the last article, it is intended, that every baptized adult person, which hath a vote in electing a minister, be a settled inhabitant, of a good conversation, a constant hearer, and contributor to the minister's maintenance."

As the records kept by Dr. Colman do not begin till December 12th, 1699, it is impossible to determine whether the foregoing votes were actually passed by the society, or whether they are simply memoranda of votes which Mr. Walker intended to propose. In either case, they are interesting, as throwing some light upon the sense in which two important articles of the Manifesto were intended to be received.

shipper is one of the efficient and direct ways in which a man may promote its prosperity. This attendance is due to his brethren, for the very purpose of their organization as a society is public worship and instruction, and every unnecessary absence, an irregular and negligent attendance, tends to defeat that purpose and cause it to fail. It is due to the pastor, whose best efforts can only be called forth by the encouragement he receives from the zeal and sympathy of the people. Two live coals brought together soon produce a flame ; let a live coal and a dead one be placed in contact, and the former will soon set on fire the latter, and presently both shall glow with intense heat ; but a live coal left to itself soon expires. The influence of pastor and people is reciprocal, and if no zeal exists or can be awakened in the latter, it will not long burn in the breast of the former. No religious society ever yet died out, dwindling first into insignificance, and finally becoming extinct, when the people, the members of it, were faithful to the obligations of membership ; and the highest genius, talent, and piety in the pulpit could not keep it up and keep it alive, if they received little or no help from those who sit in the pews.

This attendance every man owes to himself. At church, he will be in the way of duty, improvement, and holy influences. He cannot fail to get

some good, if present from a Christian purpose, with a Christian spirit and temper. He owes it to the community; for a serious observance of the Lord's day is one of the high towers of defence to the community's peace and virtue. A Christian citizen should not permit his example to tend to undermine and destroy that defence, but rather to deepen its foundations and extend its power. He owes it to God, whose wisdom and providence have set apart and sanctified a day of public praise and worship, and whose blessing makes it effectual to the prosperity and glory of a nation, to the happiness and salvation of the individual. Let us not fail in this duty. Let us seek to discharge it with more and more fidelity, even at the cost of some effort and sacrifice. Let whatever is good in our habits in this particular be preserved, improved, carried forward to perfection. Great changes have occurred since first this spot was consecrated to religious purposes, and an altar to God's worship and the spread of Christ's Gospel here erected, — changes redounding to the growth, progress, and prosperity of the city, but in some respects unfavorable to us, placing our church, pleasantly and quietly situated in itself, at an inconvenient distance from the residences of many of the citizens, requiring both of the pastor and the people an earnest and zealous spirit to preserve its prosperity. Let us not fail to manifest this spirit.

In this connection, another circumstance may be alluded to as not unworthy of consideration. Among the various changes produced of late years by the rapid growth of our city is one which, in its present and prospective influence upon our religious societies, already forces itself upon our attention. I refer to the extent to which the whole social system in Boston is broken up during the summer months, and to the large emigration into the country, as a permanent place of residence, constantly occurring. Formerly, it was a rare thing for any man in business to live in the country, and come every day to the city to attend to that business. The number of those who did this could be easily counted. A large majority of the business men lived in the city with their families. The most intimate and important social relations of nearly all were here, and only a few of the more wealthy went into the country for a few months in summer. Now all this is changed. Multitudes of business people of all occupations, of the highest and the humblest fortunes, live in the country, in the neighboring towns and villages, all the year. Their domestic, their social, their *religious* relations are there, and only their business relations here; and of those who may be said to be residents of the city, great numbers find it pleasant, convenient, and as economical as it is pleasant and convenient, to pass weeks and months of the summer in the country.

This is not to be complained of, or regretted; nor do I allude to it for that purpose. I rejoice in it, so far as it is an evidence of our prosperity, and I thank the Divine wisdom and goodness which appoint "the bounds of our habitation," that this little peninsula — destined at an early day to be covered with warehouses, given up to the purposes of trade, — the centre of a vast population and an extensive inland and foreign commerce — is bordered by a country of such varied and picturesque beauty, — a magnificent panorama of hill and dale, valley and plain, — to which we have multiplied means of cheap and easy access, and where humble industry can rear its quiet habitation, and wealth unite the beauties of nature with the comforts and refinements of art.

I would fain believe, also, that moral as well as physical good comes from these summer emigrations; that while health is promoted and pleasure enjoyed, the heart is refreshed and invigorated, the silent appeal of nature in its loveliness and grandeur acknowledged, and the conscience permitted to speak with new power amid the occasional stillness of the passions. I would fain hope that many return wiser and better, with a larger conception of God's goodness and man's duty.

But though the thing is not to be regretted and cannot be changed, though good flows from it in

various ways, its effects upon our religious societies, upon the relations of the clergy to the people and of the people to each other, and upon that influence which it is the aim and object of the clerical office to exert, are obviously not of the most desirable or beneficial kind. Ultimately, if the city continues to grow and change as it has of late years, the result must be the extinction of some of our religious societies, or their removal in their corporate capacity into the neighboring country. But "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof," and, without looking anxiously into the distant future, we may observe, as one of the evils already experienced, that the circumstance we are considering brings much of the work of the clergyman, and nearly all the good he can hope to do, the influence he can hope to exert, into eight or nine months of the year. In summer, he is preaching to a large number of empty pews, looking round upon a feeble remnant of the flock scattered here and there about the church. This has a depressing and chilling influence upon preacher and hearer. We keep up the forms of religious service during the summer, and we must keep them up; but it is very difficult to give interest and efficiency to them. It seems to be admitted that a minister cannot now do much in his parish in the summer; that comparatively little spiritual growth is to be expected

and little spiritual progress witnessed then. When autumn returns, the church begins to fill up, and the clergyman looks around on a multitude of faces, some familiar and some new. He feels that now an opportunity for zeal and effort is offered, that a great work is before him, and he sets himself resolutely to perform it. He visits, preaches, has Bible-classes or lectures ; strives in all ways and by various instrumentalities to understand and meet the spiritual wants of his hearers, and do what good he can among them, during the few months they are to be gathered together in the city. He makes some progress in this work ; he does some good undoubtedly ; but just as he is looking for the fruit of his labors, just as he has reëstablished those intimate and affectionate relations between himself and his hearers which are necessary to his best influence upon their hearts and consciences, spring returns, summer comes, a large portion of the flock are again scattered, and the work must be commenced anew the next season, to be broken off again in the same manner.

But amid all these changes and unfavorable circumstances to which I have alluded, the great condition of our prosperity, temporal and spiritual, remains the same, unchanged and unchangeable. God will never leave nor forsake us, unless we first leave and forsake him. He will be with

us as he was with our fathers, if we seek his presence, if we love the habitation of his house, if we reverence his word, prize his ordinances, wait regularly and habitually upon his worship, search with a lively interest for his will, and do it with a holy zeal. Let those who come up hither come with a devout purpose; let them be men and women loving God with heart and mind and soul and strength, leading lives of faith and prayer, earnest in duty, patient in trial, abounding in good works; let the families that meet here be families in which God is worshipped and Christ obeyed and imitated, — families in whose bosom and over whose intercourse devotion and peace and love hold sway; — then shall God be with us as he was with our fathers. He will not leave nor forsake us. He shall strengthen the walls of our Zion; his spirit shall dwell in our hearts, and prepare for our spirits a dwelling near his own excellent glory, in a better world. As members of this ancient church and society, let us all seek to be faithful in our day and generation, patient and persevering amid obstacles that are always in the path of duty. Let the retrospect of the past which we have now taken have its effect in quickening our sense of responsibleness, awakening fresh interest and zeal in all our hearts. Short is the time given to any of us in which to be faithful. Let these venerable walls admonish us; let the

shadows of the past speak to us. Let the successive generations of our fathers, as they here pass before us, exhort us. Let the memory of the departed, once fellow-worshippers here, whom we have known and loved, incite and arouse us. Ah, what changes do even a few brief years make in a congregation! How many venerable forms, — how many dear, familiar faces, no more to be seen, how many sweet and pleasant voices, no more to be heard on earth, — faces and voices of youth in its prime, of manhood in its vigor, of age in its moral beauty and excellence, — how many of these now rise up before me and before you! Of those who witnessed the beginning of my ministry among you, which cannot yet be called long, how many have "passed on"! These speak to us; all the past history of this church and society appeals to us, and bids us, by our honor and peace, by the mercies of Heaven and the necessities of men, to be steadfast, zealous, faithful, persevering. Let each determine for himself to obey that appeal. So shall the Lord God be with us and with our children, as he was with our fathers.

Brattle Street, December 7th, 1850.

NOTE.

In the account given, on pages 72–74, of the Rev. William Cooper's connection with the ordination of the Rev. Robert Breck, in 1736, and the controversy it engendered, I omitted to mention, what Mr. Cooper would wish to have appear in any account of his conduct on that occasion, that, before proceeding to the meeting of the council at Springfield, he had fully satisfied himself of the orthodoxy of Mr. Breck. This appears from the pamphlet, "An Examination," &c., of which Cooper was supposed to be the author. On the 87th page of that pamphlet, after allusion to the refusal of the ministers of the Hampshire Association to examine Mr. Breck, is the following statement: —

"Whereas Robert Breck, M. A., of Harvard College in *Cambridge,* hath applied himself to us the subscribers, a number of the associated pastors in Boston, earnestly requesting us to inquire into his principles in religion, These may certify, that on the 8th day of May, 1735, we discoursed with him to our good satisfaction concerning his orthodoxy in the great doctrines of Christianity, as believed and professed in the churches of Christ in *New England,* agreeable to the Westminster Confession of Faith, and so recommend him to the Grace of God and his brethren in Christ.

"Benjamin Colman,	Thomas Foxcroft,
Joseph Sewall,	Samuel Checkley,
John Webb,	Joshua Gee,
William Cooper,	Mather Byles."

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